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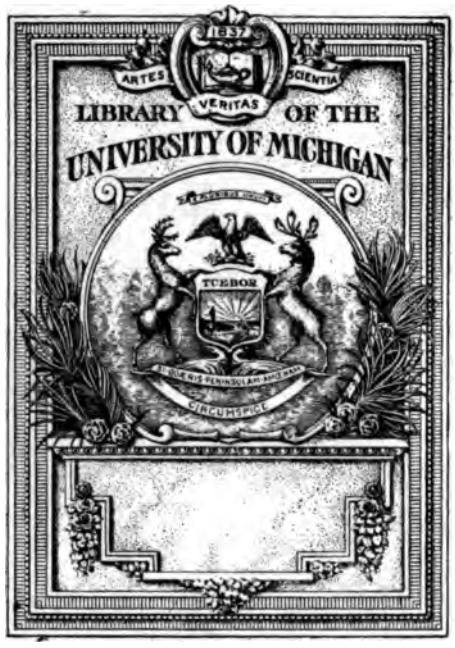
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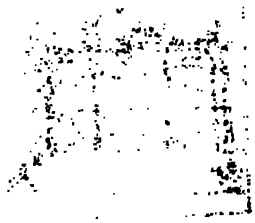
JAMES BOSWELL

TO THE REV. W. J. TEMPLE





James Boswell
from a drawing by George Dance R.A.





LETTERS OF
JAMES BOSWELL
TO THE REV. W. J. TEMPLE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THOMAS SECCOMBE



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INTRODUCTION

I

THESE letters were written between 1758 and 1795 by James Boswell, the biographer of Johnson, to his college friend, W. J. Temple, grandfather of the late Archbishop Temple, then living in Devon. Lost to sight for half a century the originals were brought to light as the result of a somewhat remarkable concatenation of circumstances. In the autumn of 1850 an English gentleman, a certain Major Stone, of the Hon. East India Company's service, was making a purchase in a shop at Boulogne-sur-Mer when he found that the wrapper in which his purchase was enclosed was a fragment of an English letter bearing the signature of James Boswell. The source of supply was eagerly traced to an itinerant vendor of paper who visited Boulogne two or three times a year. Among his stock the originals of the letters were found almost complete bearing ancient post marks in addition to the franks of a large number of people well known in Boswell's day. External and internal evidence have agreed too well for the slightest doubt ever to be maintained as to the authenticity of the letters. Aut Boswell, aut Diabolus! A reasonable explanation has indeed been found as to the whereabouts of the documents in the fact that Anne Temple, the eldest daughter and amanuensis of Boswell's

correspondent married in 1796 the Rev. Charles Powlett (1765–1834) who migrated about 1825 to Outreau on the Liane some three miles or so above Boulogne. The obituary memoir on this versatile divine written by an extremely candid friend who signs himself "A Biographer" and inadvertently inserted in the column especially devoted to deaths among the clergy some three and a half years before the actual decease of its subject, forms one of the gems of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. With ample aid from corroborative circumstance of a more or less whimsical character, Mr. Powlett is demonstrated to be a grandson of Polly Peachum and the Duke of Bolton. He held for a time the Bolton living in Cornwall, and it was there that he formed an acquaintance with Miss Temple, "the daughter of the learned rector of Gluvias, whose character of Gray the poet is inserted in Mason's life of that illustrious genius." Miss Temple is said, upon her father's death in 1796, to have brought her husband a nice sum of money which twenty years later, with the help of some accumulations, may have amounted to £400 a year, and it was on this annuity that Powlett subsisted during the ten years of his exile. He died at Brussels in 1834.*

Happily resuscitated as a result of the accident related above, the letters were given to the world under the date of 1857,† bearing the following title: "Letters of James Boswell. Addressed to the Rev. W. J. Temple.

* For details of the engagement to Miss Temple see pp. 275, 276, 284, 286.

† For further details as to the vicissitudes of the "Letters" see *Edinburgh Review*, April 1857; *Notes and Queries*, second series, iii. 381–2; and *Times*, 6 January, 1857. The *Times* devoted six entire columns to a review of the book, commenced on January 3 and completed on January 8! Lucky authors, publishers (and reviewers) of 1857!

Now first published from the Original MSS. With an Introduction and Notes. London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty." 1857. Printed by John Edward Taylor, Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields." [pp. xlviii. + 407]. The preface is dated 15 November, 1856, and the work was in fact issued just before Christmas 1856. The December journals contained long and deservedly favourable notices, and the edition was sold out in under two years. Hitherto, for some reason or other, it has not been reprinted and the *editio princeps* has become scarce. The editing was admirably done, and why the anonymity of the editor should have been so strictly observed it would be difficult to say.

The letters were originally brought under the notice of the publisher by Mr. Edmund Hornby, of 6 Fig-Tree Court, Temple, and Weybridge, to whom they had been entrusted by Augustus Boyse, of the Inner Temple, the nephew and heir of the original discoverer, Major Stone. Mr. Hornby had the intention of editing the documents himself. He was summoned abroad on official duty at the critical moment, and left the task to a young friend, Mr. Philip Francis, of the Temple.

The very name of Francis is a terror to the literary historian, and is, generally speaking, so awe-inspiring to the reader when he meets it that he incontinently turns over three pages and begins again. The authorship of "Ossian," "The Whole Duty of Man," the "Εικων βασιλικη," or the "Marprelate Tracts," has puzzled the experts for many generations; but no secret of authorship has devastated such vast fields of print as the mystery of Junius. The conjuncture of Philip and Francis in one name, in fact, is so ominous that to offer a complete solution of the identity of any such person would be the height of presumption. I

shall attempt no more, therefore, than to depone that after a great drawing of blank coverts my final conjecture is that the original editor of 1856 can be no other than Sir Philip Francis, of the Supreme Consular Court of the Levant, who died on board H.M.S. *Antelope* on 9 August, 1876. He would thus be a younger brother of Henry Ralph Francis (1811–1900), the "last surviving grandson of Junius," who was, like himself, a colonial judge, and, like himself, was in 1856 a briefless barrister about London *en disponibilité universelle.*

This H. R. Francis was well known to the club-world of the eighties as a whist-player, raconteur, and agreeable writer, mainly on angling, though he must not be confused with that better-known authority on matters piscatorial, Mr. Francis Francis (whose name is surely a double bulwark of defence against the intrusions of irresponsible biographers); and for a time I was led by many circumstances to think that this H. R. F. might have had a large share in this compilation, though I am now persuaded that such a conjecture would be unwarrantable.

Reverting then to Philip Francis of the Middle Temple—and it is fairly plain that the author of this intercalary matter and commentary, whatever else he may have been, must have been a lawyer—it appears that he was the youngest son of Philip Francis and grandson of the egregious man of Letters; that he was born in 1822, and called to the Bar from the Middle Temple in the Michaelmas Term of 1845. He would at the time of this compilation have been a lightly-encumbered barrister on the Home Circuit at the wholly likely age of thirty-four, and he appears to have been a friend of Edmund Hornby, whose influence procured him an appointment in 1861 at Constantinople. There he soon

became assistant judge and registrar of the Supreme Consular Court of the Levant, and then, after some service in Egypt, he became a full judge of the Supreme Court at Constantinople in 1867. Subsequently he was summoned to Cairo by Nubar Pasha as British Commissioner to represent his country during the international conference on Judicial Reform in Egypt. His ability and the ascendency which he obtained during these deliberations was marked, and he was knighted in 1868. He held a prominent and very popular position among the European colony at Pera, and his funeral ceremony at Scutari, after his sudden death on board a British cruiser in the Mediterranean, was made the occasion of a great demonstration of regard. The delicate sense of ironic humour, occasionally rather sardonic in its tone, with which he was credited by his friends may certainly be detected in the notes to this edition of the Boswell correspondence.

As one example among many let me cite the quiet comment upon Boswell's characteristic prayer:* "What a strange, complicated scene is this life. It always strikes me that we cannot seriously, closely, and clearly examine almost any part of it. We are at pains to bring up children, just to give them an opportunity of struggling through cares and fatigues; but let us hope for gleams of joy, and a blaze hereafter." To which the editor appends just this note: "A somewhat ambiguous prayer, but doubtless it is to a blaze of *joy* the writer was aspiring." A richer revelation of unconscious humour was hardly ever put before the reader than that contained in this correspondence, and both editor and publisher (especially after the elaborate reviews and the proofs which these elicited as to the authenticity of the *provenance* claimed for the MSS.)

* See page 193.

might have well expected a far heartier reception than the volume actually received. As a contribution to the perennial gaiety of nations its merits cannot be indefinitely eclipsed; and, when it does come to its own, its original editor will certainly gain much credit for his wide knowledge and excellent management of the documents at his disposal.*

The turn has come now of the "second lead" and faithful correspondent of our hero, Parson W. J. Temple.† Like his grandfather George, and his father William, of Allerdean, William Johnston Temple, the descendant of a Border family of the Presbyterian faith and old standing in the locality, was born at Berwick-on-Tweed, on 6 December, 1739. It was as we know in the Greek class at Edinburgh that he made the intimate acquaintance of Boswell whose Atticus he became from 1758 onwards. On leaving Edinburgh he took rooms in Farrar's Buildings, at the bottom of Inner Temple Lane, and reluctantly left those elegant apart-

* After due deliberation it was thought undesirable to reproduce the original Introduction of 1856, as it would have involved much tedious repetition. The facts there given need supplementing at almost every point. The opinions are dominated to an extent which would not be appreciated by readers of to-day by Carlyle's then recently published Essay on Boswell's Johnson. The editor's work is seen at its best in the explanatory connections which are here preserved intact. Although the Letters of 1857 have not been reprinted, many books have drawn upon them largely and most legitimately for materials, among them, not of course the "Boswelliana" of 1856, but the two later and most amusing volumes that go by that name, and also the two agreeable "Lives of Boswell" by Mr. Fitzgerald and by Mr. Leask. I believe I have heard that many volumes of the original edition were destroyed in a fire. Their number is far too few at the present day for the "lues Boswelliana" to be disseminated as it deserves.

† Our knowledge of the Temple family has increased vastly since 1857 owing to the success of the lineage in the person and career of the late Archbishop of Canterbury.

ments in 1763 to take up his residence at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, when he lent his London chambers to his generous young friend from Auchinleck. After July in this year Boswell found them very handy owing to their proximity to those of his eminent friend "Dictionary Johnson." In 1766 Temple was ordained deacon and priest and was presented by his first cousin once removed, the fourth Viscount Lisburne, to the modest but agreeable living of Mamhead, near Exeter. "My friend," wrote Boswell to him with befitting solemnity, "it is your office to labour cheerfully in the vineyard, and if possible to leave not a tare in Mamhead;" and when he got weary of the charms of his perpetual curacy Boswell counselled him to seek the comforts of a house and the kind endearments of an amiable woman. In the same letter he enlarges upon his own liaison with a "dear infidel" whose generosity is described with an incomparable *naïveté*. Next year on August 6, after some passing attraction at Mamhead, Temple took his friend's advice, married Ann Stow, daughter of William Stow, of Berwick, and with her inherited some property at Allerdean in Durham. The marriage, though prolific, does not seem to have been uniformly happy. Temple in 1770 had an idea of securing a colonial chaplaincy with a view of thus effecting a virtual separation. Boswell at this conjuncture, sanguine as ever, wrote to Mrs. Temple urging submission and elevating the ideal of wifely duty. In 1774 Temple published through Edward and Charles Dilly a dull book of one hundred pages small quarto, entitled "An Essay on the Clergy, their Studies, Recreations, Decline of Influence, &c. &c." He seems in the meantime, to have been in very low water financially, and sounded his plaintive bleat of discontent with a persistency which reverberates through much published

correspondence during this period. The dull book, however, by some divine mischance, seems to have materially aided his prospects, and, in 1776, partly, no doubt, owing to the renewed influence of Lord Lisburne, he obtained what was described as the best living in the diocese of Exeter, that of St. Gluvias, in Cornwall, with a total revenue, we gather, of well over £500 a year. Before this date, as we learn in part from these letters, he had been persistently in trouble. His wife, like Dogberry, had had disappointments, chiefly owing to the bankruptcy of the head of her family, Fenwick Stow; while Temple's father, who had abandoned a small post in the Customs, was wholly unprovided for. Boswell's unabated exuberance of anticipation may have been in part responsible for the uninterrupted whining of Temple's laments. He seems, however, to have been a dissatisfied, atrabilious man, restless, excitable, and always craving for more experience and better company than Bolerium could afford.

In a MS. diary, under date, 25 May, 1782, our Atticus complains rather acidly of his Cicero, as "irregular in conduct and manners, selfish, indelicate, no sensibility or feeling for others." Mrs. Temple, too, it appears, disliked Boswell, rather intensely. Yet it must be said that, if occasionally trying to the temper, Boswell nevertheless always played a very friendly part towards the "monitor" and his wife. He made Johnson known to them for instance; he took Paoli down to Mamhead, he had Temple up to town and took him and his daughter to Westminster Hall to see the trial of Warren Hastings. He took them more than once to Sir Joshua's studio in Leicester Square; he acted as godfather to one of the sons, and tipped another who was at Eton. As young men they had mingled tears of enthusiasm over Mason and Gray, and when the latter died,

Boswell caused to be published in the *London Magazine* for March 1772 a succinct appreciation of Gray by Temple which Mason himself used, and which Johnson adapted.* This and his revision of Boswell's "Tour in Corsica" will do more to preserve Temple's name from oblivion than any of the writings under his own name.† His letters to Boswell (which may possibly at some future date be rescued) should prove interesting. They must have had a decided knack of eliciting confidences. We may owe a good deal to the man to whom Bozzy confided his deliberate judgment of Gibbon as "an ugly, affected, disgusting fellow who poisons our literary club to me," his conviction of Hawkins's malevolence ("Observe how he talks of me as quite unknown") and his explanation of how in order to live down to his father's ideal of companionship he had to dull his faculties with small beer. As it is, Temple's contemplated defence of his friend against the aspersion of melancholy in the *Gentleman's Magazine* touches us more nearly than his intended *magnum opus* on "Modern Rome." He outlived his "untoward" wife by rather over three years and died at Gluvias (where there is an unveracious epitaph) on 13 August, 1796.

II

It was at the age of sixteen or seventeen, that is to say, in 1756 or 1757, when they were students together in Hunter's Greek class at Edinburgh University, that Boswell first allied himself with Temple. He went on to Glasgow in 1757 to sit under Adam Smith, while Temple went up to Cambridge. A year

* "Thou characteriser of Gray," Boswell calls him. See pages 177, 266.

† For a list of these see "Dict. Nat. Biog." and Cambridge University Library Catalogue.

later the long correspondence begins. Boswell found in Temple what he afterwards found in his books, a means of unburdening himself lavishly of his noble ambitions and his ignoble acts. In these letters he first mounts the hobby of his own temperament which was to remain his master-passion through life; and the opportunities that he misses of self-portraiture are few. He is a man of ancient blood and pride, grave and reserved, with a Spanish stateliness of manner. A man of whom any father would be proud. His parts are bright, and his education good. He is fond of seeing the world. He eats of every good dish, especially apple-pie. He drinks old hock. He has a very fine temper. He is of a good manly countenance, as attractive as it is amorous. He has infinite vivacity, yet is observed at times to have a melancholy cast. "My life is one of the most romantic . . . and yet I am a very sensible, good sort of man." He is youthful, warm and natural, in charming health and spirits. What a fortunate fellow too with the ladies, what a variety of adventures in all countries. "Upon my soul a fine woman." Nothing can check the irresistible flow of his confidences.* The letters are teeming with absurdity, anticlimax and the humiliating enumeration of the quaintest foibles. Yet to how many, if we could only speak frankly, are they not also a looking-glass and confessional of the crude ambitions, enthusiasms, vanities, and aberrations of our youth? Books read in college-rooms with noble fervour, lamps burning all the night, reputations

* Touching his conscious habit of babbling at random and his aspiration to become grave and reserved, see the letter in Malvolio's vein on page 98. "I wish to be at last an uniform, pretty man." Wax to the impression of the great doctor, and simultaneously that vainest of God's creatures, a Scotch peacock playing at Narcissus to his own image! One must read Montaigne on Vanity to begin to understand the plump, "stately," smile-provoking James Boswell.

made and unmade, resolutions fixed to stand by our country and reform it in ways which our fathers for all their solidity have unaccountably missed, the conviction that the world is steadily improving and that we, young immortals, are going to advance matters sensibly towards the not remote millennium—with such infirmities, long buried by us in uninstructive oblivion, are the opening pages of Boswell's letters deeply concerned, and his closing pages too for that matter. For indeed Boswell never grew old. He retained to the end that delightful optimism of the schoolboy out of harness that one day he was certain to shine, to be the great man, whether in dissipation, elegance, learning, athletics, oratory, music, strategy, or buffoonery, it did not so much matter so long as he were first, raised up on other men's shoulders, applauded and worshipped. The obsession of Bozzy by this idea and the outspoken expression of it in the successive phases of life makes of these letters, which are the ante-chamber to his famous "Life of Johnson," the unique documents that they are. In them too the story of his life may most clearly be traced for upwards of thirty years. It was in 1760, at the age of twenty, that this ebullient son of a sedate old Scots judge was first brought into contact with the elegance, the refinement, and the liberality of London society for which he had sighed so long and the thirst for which was to torment him almost to the last. The young Earl of Eglintoun it was who first took him to Newmarket and introduced him into the society of the great, the gay, and the ingenious. Reclaimed with some difficulty by the Laird of Auchinleck from his rakish companions and wild scheme for entering the Guards, the youthful James contrived to alleviate the irksomeness of law study in Edinburgh by forcing his acquaintance upon the celebrities then assembled in

the northern capital, among them Kames, Blair, Robertson, Hume and Sir David Dalrymple (Lord Hailes) of whose sayings on the Northern Circuit he kept a brief journal. Boswell had already realised his vocation, the exercise of which was to give a new word to the language. He had begun to Boswellise. He was already on the track of bigger game—the biggest available in the Britain of that day.

In the spring of 1763 Boswell came to a composition with his father. He consented to give up his pursuit of a guidon in the Guards and three and sixpence a day on condition that his father would allow him to study civil law on the Continent. He set out in April 1763 by "the best road in Scotland" with a servant, on horseback like himself, in a "cocked hat, a brown wig, brown coat made in the court fashion, red vest, corduroy small clothes, and long, military boots."

On Monday, 16 May, 1763, in the backshop of Tom Davies, the bookseller with the pretty wife, No. 8, Russell Street, Covent Garden, James Boswell first met "Dictionary Johnson," the great man of his dreams, and was severely buffeted by him. Eight days later, on Tuesday, May 24, Boswell boldly called on Mr. Johnson at his chambers on the first floor of No. 1 Inner Temple Lane. On this occasion Johnson pressed him to stay; on June 13 he said, "Come to me as often as you can"; on June 25 Boswell gave the great man a little sketch of his own life, and Johnson exclaimed with warmth, "Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you." Boswell experienced a variety of sensations, among which exultation was predominant. Some one asked, "Who is this Scotch cur at Johnson's heels?" "He is not a cur," replied Goldsmith, "he is only a bur. Tom Davies flung him at Johnson in

sport and he has the faculty of sticking." Johnson was fifty-four at this time and Boswell twenty-three. After June 1763 they met on something like two hundred and seventy subsequent days. These meetings formed the memorable part of Boswell's life, and they are told inimitably in his famous biography of his friend. The friendship consecrated by the most delightful of biographies, and one of the most gorgeous feasts in the whole banquet of letters, was not so ill-assorted as has been maintained. Boswell's freshness at the table of conversation gave a new zest to every maxim that Johnson enunciated, while Boswell developed a perfect genius for interpreting the kind of worldly philosophy at which Johnson was so unapproachable. Both men welcomed an excuse for avoiding the taskwork of life. Johnson's favourite indulgence was to talk; Boswell's great idea of success to elicit memorable conversation. Boswell is almost equally admirable as a reporter and as an interviewer, as a collector and as a researcher. He prepared meetings for Johnson, he prepared topics for him, he drew him out on questions of the day, he secured a copy of his famous letter to Lord Chesterfield, he obtained an almost verbatim report of Johnson's interview with the King, he frequented the tea-table of Miss Williams, he attended the testy old scholar on lengthy peregrinations in the Highlands and in the Midlands. "Sir," said Johnson to his follower, "you appear to have only two subjects—yourself and me—and I'm sick of both."

Yet thorough as the scheme was from the outset, and admirable as was the devotedness of the biographer, Boswell was far too volatile a man to confine himself to any one ambition in life that was not consistent with a large amount of present fame, or, to use his own word,

"conspicuousness." He would have liked to Boswellise the popular idol, Wilkes, or Chatham, or Voltaire, or even the great Frederick himself. As it was, during his Continental tour, he crossed from Leghorn to Cape Corso, and managed in November 1765 to get on terms with Pasquale de Paoli, the hero, the Garibaldi of that generation—the leader, in brief, of the Corsican insurgents in that rash revolt against Genoa which landed them in the net of France. He posed to Paoli as a kind of Hamlet, a mountain prince of Scotia, abandoned to melancholy, bewildered by fruitless metaphysical wanderings, and for ever incapable of decisive action. He also took the liberty of asking Paoli a thousand questions with regard to the most minute and private circumstances of his life. He rode out on Paoli's own horse, with furniture of crimson velvet and gold lace; he exulted in being taken for an ambassador; he played to the Corsicans on his German flute our beautiful old Scots tunes, "Gilderoy" and "Corn Riggs are Bonny"; he turned "Hearts of Oak" into Italian, quoted Johnson's moral sayings, and fancied himself, as he wrote to J. J. Rousseau, all Plutarch's heroes rolled into one. After six weeks of this exotic existence he escorted Rousseau's Thérèse to London, and, in February 1766, found himself back in Fleet Street, at the Mitre, introducing Temple to "Dictionary Johnson." In this same month he called on the Earl of Chatham in Corsican costume to plead the cause of Paoli. Boswell wrote to thank the statesman for his "genteel reception," adding, "Could your lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter?"

In accordance with the family compact, already referred to, Boswell was now admitted advocate at Edinburgh, and signalised his return to the law by an

enthusiastic pamphlet entitled, "The Essence of the Douglas Cause" (November 1767), in which he vigorously defended the youthful claimant from the charge of imposture. In August 1767 he had sold to Mr. Dilly in the Poultry, for a hundred guineas, to be paid within three months of publication, his "Account of Corsica: Journal of a Tour to that Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli," which was printed by the Foulis Brothers of Glasgow, and brought out early in 1768. The liveliness of personal impression which he managed to communicate to all his books gained for this one a deserved success. The "Diary of a green goose and a Hero," as Gray called it, was read by everybody, and promptly translated into French, German, Italian, and Dutch. The author, known as "Paoli Boswell," came to London to enjoy his triumph in March. "My book has amazing celebrity," he writes to Temple. "Lord Lytton, Mr. Walpole, Mrs. Macaulay, Mr. Garrick have all written me noble letters about it. . . . I am really the *great man* now. I have had David Hume in the forenoon, and Mr. Johnson in the afternoon of the same day visiting me. Sir John Pringle, Dr. Franklin dined with me one day, Mr. Johnson and General Oglethorpe one day, Mr. Garrick alone another, David Hume and other *literati* next week. . . . In a day or two I set up my chariot. . . . You must think awhile to enjoy the idea." Boswell plunged into all his youthful dissipations. He found that the fever of play still lurked in his veins, and lost more money than he could pay. He drank heavily, in spite of the solemn pledges he had made to Paoli and to Temple "under the solemn yew."* He fell in love with a series of "angelic girls." Marriage was beyond his means. Adultery he regarded as the most horrible

* See pages 130, 160, 189, 231, 255.

of faults. He has, however, taken a house for a sweet little mistress who has been deserted by her husband. The names of Miss Blair, Mary Anne, *la belle Irlandoise*, an Italian angel, a Dutch charmer called Zelide, Miss Bosville, Miss Dick, and "the Princess," succeed those of Miss W——t and the sweet little one rapidly in this connection.* "I find mistresses wherever I go," he writes to Temple. In July 1769 he is distracted by the news that Paoli is in London, having been expelled from Corsica by the French. On his way to town he appears in character at the Shakespeare Jubilee, and to aid the crowd in the task of identifying him, has a placard inserted in his hat bearing the legend, "Corsican Boswell." The following categorical description of his attire was obligingly supplied to the *London Magazine* (with an engraving) by the chief performer himself. "One of the most remarkable masks upon this occasion was James Bowell, Esq., in the dress of an armed Corsican chief. He entered the amphitheatre about twelve o'clock. He wore a short dark-coloured coat of coarse cloth, scarlet waistcoat and breeches, and black spatterdashes; his cap, or bonnet, was of black cloth; on the front it was embroidered in gold letters, *viva la libertà*, and on one side of it was a handsome blue feather and cockade, so that it had an elegant as well as a warlike appearance. On the breast of his coat was sewed a Moor's head, the crest of Corsica, surrounded with branches of laurel. He had also a cartridge-pouch, into which was stuck a stiletto, and on his left side a pistol was hung upon the belt of his cartridge-pouch. He had a fusee slung across his shoulder, wore no powder in his hair, but had it plaited at full length with a knot of blue ribbon at the end of

* For some essays at the identification of these charmers see *Notes and Queries*, *passim*, and especially second series iii. *loc. cit.*

it. He had, by way of a staff, a very curious vine, all of one piece, emblematical of the sweet bard of Avon. He wore no mask, saying it was not proper for a gallant Corsican. So soon as he came into the room he drew universal attention." * The proposal of the Stratford-on-Avon tradesmen that they ought to have a jubilee at Stratford every year met with his warm support. "I flatter myself," he wrote to Garrick, "with the prospect of attending you at several more jubilees." In London he dined with "the great," and endeavoured to extract from Johnson his views at large upon the subject of marriage. The oracle was dumb, but Boswell was soon to test the question experimentally, for after a short trip in Ireland, undertaken, in part, to empty his head of Corsica (Johnson's emphatic direction), he married his cousin, Miss Peggy Montgomery, on 25 November, 1769. That his previous liaisons must have caused him for a time a good deal of anxiety is a natural inference from some of his confessions to Temple about this time.† Nor was he free, it seems, in his unwonted constancy, from fits of passion or gloom, though he ascribes these outbursts, rather oddly, to his wife's great goodness. "There is something childish in it, I confess."

For some years after this Boswell's visits to London were brief, and his correspondence, even with Johnson and Temple, perceptibly slackened. The great tour in the Hebrides was mooted, but laid aside for a more fitting opportunity. Boswell senior, regarded such jaunts as "idle and extravagant," rather than in the proper light as "highly improving." On 30 April, 1773, Boswell was present at his admission to the Literary Club, for which honour he had been proposed by Johnson himself, and in the autumn of this year in

* See page 109. † See page 134.

the course of his tour in the Hebrides, Johnson visited the Boswells in Ayrshire. Neither Boswell's father nor his wife shared his enthusiasm for the lexicographer. Lord Auchinleck remarked that Jamie was "gane clean gyte. . . . And whose tail do ye think he has pinned himself to now, man? A dominie, an auld dominie, that keepit a schule and ca'd it an academy!" Housewives less prim than Mrs. Boswell might have objected to Johnson's habit of turning lighted candles upside down when in the parlour to make them burn better. She called the great man a bear. Boswell's "Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides" was written for the most part during the journey, but was not published until the spring of 1786. The diary of Pepys was not then known to the public, and Boswell's indiscretions as to the emotions aroused in him by the neat tripping ladies' maids at Inverary and the extremity of drunkenness which he exhibited at Corrichatachin created a literary sensation and sent the "Tour" through three editions in one year. In the meantime his pecuniary and other difficulties at home were great. He made hardly more than £100 a year by his profession, and his relations with his father were persistently strained. In 1775 he began to keep terms at the Inner Temple, and managed to see a good deal of Johnson between whom and John Wilkes he succeeded in bringing about a meeting at the famous dinner at Dilly's on 15 May, 1776. On 30 August, 1782, his father died, leaving him an estate with £1600 a year. On 30 June, 1784, Boswell met Johnson for the last time at a dinner at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. He accompanied him back in the coach from Leicester Square to Bolt Court. "We bade adieu to each other affectionately in the carriage. When he had got down upon the foot-pavement he called out 'Fare you well'; and without looking back, sprung away with a kind of

pathetic briskness, if I may use that expression, which seemed to indicate a struggle to conceal uneasiness, and impressed me with a foreboding of our long, long separation." Johnson died that year, and two years later the Boswells moved to London. In 1789 Mrs. Boswell died, leaving five children. She had been an excellent mother and a good wife, despite the infidelities and drunkennesses of her husband, and from her death Boswell relapsed into worse excesses, grievously aggravated by hypochondria.* He died of a complication of disorders at his house in Great Portland Street on 19 May, 1795, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and was buried a fortnight later at Auchinleck. Subjected more than most people, it may be, in his later days to the sense of the futility of human life, the failure of the "towering hopes" of youth, Boswell had yet achieved, in a way that can be alleged of how few men, the main purpose of his erratic career, and it might truly have been inscribed on his epitaph that he had "Johnsonised" the land. The desire that his life should *tell* † had been signally fulfilled. Up to the eve of his last illness he had been busy upon his sheet-anchor and *chef-d'œuvre* "The Life of Samuel Johnson," which was in process of crystallisation to the last. The first edition was published in two quarto volumes in an edition of 1700 copies on 16 May, 1791. He was preparing a third edition when he died; this was completed by his friend, Edmund Malone, who brought out a fifth edition in 1807. That of James Boswell junior (the editor of Malone's variorum Shakespeare, 1821) appeared in 1811. The eleventh was brought out by John Wilson Croker in 1831; in this the original text is expanded by numerous letters and variorum anecdotes, and is already knee-

* See page 270. † See page 245.

deep in annotation.* Its blunders provoked the celebrated and mutually corrective criticisms of Macaulay and Carlyle.

Sir Leslie Stephen, writing twenty years ago, maintained that the last word on the subject was contained in these last two essays. But there is no last word in literary biography or literary criticism until a once famous reputation is moribund. This is certainly not the case with Boswell, who fills a larger place every year in our literary consciousness as one of the greatest of all British humourists. His morbid loquacity, which makes him blurt out things that we studiously ignore about ourselves, whether from inattention or shame, makes him a freak of letters, but a freak, like that of the patient with a glass window in his intestine, simply invaluable to the students of psychological analysis. And, in spite of his ludicrous immoralities, it is clear that he was a tender-hearted man, his heart was in the right place, and if he is an inconsistent bundle of humours, all things by turns and nothing long, he represents to the letter the " homme ondoyant et divers" of M. Montaigne's profound speculation. His nature, it must seem, was subject in a remarkable degree to the violent fluctuations and ebullitions that one expects from a popular actor. And, indeed, he was an actor, as a mimic of Johnson he surpassed even Garrick, and he was practically never off the stage. And yet, throughout his whole career, he pursued with a singular consistency an object worthy of a great artist, namely, the *developpement du moi* through the medium of a

* Its value as an unrivalled granary of Johnsoniana, stored opportunely before the last links with the Johnsonian Age had disappeared, has not perhaps been adequately recognised, though it has been easily surpassed in all scholarly qualities by the famous six-volume edition of 1887 by Dr. Birkbeck Hill, which has taken rank with Elwin's " Pope," Spedding's " Bacon," and Cook's " Ruskin."

detailed, experimental biography and autobiography combined—that *magnum opus*, of the greatness of which he was so fully conscious and of the deliberate aim and intention of which he gives so many interesting hints in these "Letters." * Such an object has been effected now and again by the greatest of creative artists such as Plato, Virgil, Dante, Milton, Bunyan, Scott, Shelley, and Wordsworth. It has been done to a less degree in diaries and novels, and allegories and essays; but never before, or since, in a biography. Boswell's "Johnson," to which the "Letters" form so indispensable a portal, is thus unique. It has many other unrivalled qualities. As a full length, for instance, with all the blotches and pimples revealed ("I will not make my tiger a cat to please anybody!"); as a model of dramatic biography; as a gallery of figures veraciously observed in order to be described with so delicate a finesse and so comical a perception of human frailty; or as an inexhaustible mine of Table Talk, Boswell's "Life" has tinged the whole lives of many thousands of people now living, and will tinge that of many hundreds of thousands still to be born. But it is more than that. It is more than the life of an individual. It is as a representation of Human Life in the widest and most general sense that the book is unique.

The old theory to explain such a marvel, originally propounded by Gray when the "Tour in Corsica" appeared, that "any fool may write a valuable book by chance," and Macaulay's emendation to the effect that Boswell wrote his book because, and not in despite of the fact that he was a fool, are now regarded as equally untenable. Boswell was a fool only in the sense that he claimed the rights of a chartered libertine, as a jester of old or

* For the progress of Boswell's sentiment in regard to his work, see pages 218, 221, 257–8, 265, 267, 278, 282.

a lunatic among Red Indians, to make his book a Palace of Truth, an altar to a new divinity almost unknown in literature. His quasi-divine candour makes us laugh, but while laughing we are forced to the conclusion that Boswell's was a biographical genius of the very first order. It is one of the surest signs of Johnson's superiority that (in spite of all Boswell's teasing importunities and indescribable vagaries) he knew how to appreciate Boswell. For other reasons I love and revere Macaulay, only less than Sir Walter or St. Charles; but nothing reveals Macaulay's impenetrable pomposity in a worse light than his rhetorical passage about Boswell (the well-known one, commencing "Servile and impertinent, shallow and pedantic, a bigot and a sot") or shows more convincingly at what a terrible cost of flexibility and humour his supremely great qualities had to be purchased. Boswell's charm for us is ever his inextinguishable and instinctive humanity—the transparent way in which, through the infinite variety of moods that chase one another over the surface of his mind, he thinks aloud (as primitive men and criminals, it is said, are wont to do) and in thinking aloud reveals the iridescent Everyman that lurks in each one of us. If it could ever be the desiderium of the critic to endeavour to condense a chameleon into a small glass bead, it were easy, by way of summary, to reflect the diminutive image of Boswell as a correspondent in that prince among postcripts which confronts the delighted reader at the close of that letter to Temple, written in such "a hurry of variety" from Grantham on 22 May, 1775. "There is a Miss Silverton in the Fly with me, an amiable creature who has been in France. I can unite little fondnesses with perfect conjugal love. Remember to put my letters in a book neatly; see which of us does it first"! Who

can describe Albion as perfidious, or a hypocrite, after this ?

At a friend's death-bed one instant, reciting Young's "Night Thoughts," in a stage coach the next, exulting in the complacency of a plump widow who nurses his lame leg upon her knee, making noble resolutions of constancy in the hall, and entirely losing his equanimity upon the intrusion of a handsome housemaid (Matty's her name, if you want to know) into the parlour, sighing for office at one moment, for sound scholarship the next, and going home blind drunk and toppling into a ditch the same evening, Boswell gives us in these letters one of the most amazing transparencies of vain humanity that we can ever expect to see exhibited.

And the republication of this wonderful looking-glass has an appropriate significance in this winter season of 1908–9. The first is the year of Boswell's elevation in his favourite impersonation of *the great man* at Lichfield: the second is the bicentenary of Dr. Johnson's birth in the same city.

THOMAS SECCOMBE.

ACTON, *October* 1908.

LETTERS OF JAMES BOSWELL

CHAPTER I

1758–1761

Boswell's early style of letter-writing—The "Elegance of Friendship"—Elfrida—Introduction to David Hume—His character—Falls in love with Miss W——t—Her qualities and fortune—Mr. Love, the player—Sir David Dalrymple—Cambridge—Study of law at Edinburgh—Dr. Johnson's bumper to Lord Hailes—Boswell on heirs male and treatment of daughters—Journalising.

THE two following letters were written when Boswell was but eighteen years of age. Even at this early period of his life we see, strongly marked, some of those qualities of mind which have been referred to [in the original Introduction]; such, for instance, as his fondness for the society of celebrated persons, his facility for fancying himself in love, and the entirely erroneous conception he had of his own character.

These two letters afford a fair specimen of the style of correspondence current at that time among young men of his class.

1] EDINBURGH, 29*th July*, 1758.

DEAR SIR,—Your very obliging letter came safe to hand two days ago. I spoke to my father again about my going to Berwick; but as he still disapproved of it, and as he has been so kind as to promise to take me the North Circuit with him, I really could not insist upon

it, so you must excuse me from having the pleasure of waiting upon you this season. What my Lord said was very just, that it was not long since we saw one another (not long indeed in the eye of the world, but to faithful friends a tedious absence), and that our being separated for some time would greatly enhance the happiness of our meeting; besides, as I would be hurried just now, it would not be so agreeable, and I might be in some danger of being the worse for it, which would be very unlucky; so that really when I impartially weigh all circumstances, I begin to be convinced that it is better to delay it till another year, when I hope to have the pleasure of making a deliberate visit, when we can enjoy all the elegance of friendship, talk over our several studies, and take an agreeable jaunt through Northumberland.

I congratulate you on the entertainment you received from the two performances you mention. "Elfrida" * I have seen, but never read it; however I intend to have it on your recommendation. I will not compliment you on your exact judgment and nice discernment, but only say, as we have pretty much a similarity of taste, what pleases you must likewise please me. That on the Spleen (if done with spirit) will be very entertaining. I suppose by this time you are returned from your expedition to the Newcastle Assizes. I hope you have been well entertained, and are the better for the ride.

Some days ago I was introduced to your friend Mr. Hume; he is a most discreet, affable man as ever I met with, and has really a great deal of learning, and

* This Play was written by Mason, the biographer of Gray. It was brought out with the music of Arne. Dr. Johnson summed up its merits thus: "There are now and then some good imitations of Milton's bad manner."

a choice collection of books. He is indeed an extraordinary man,—few such people are to be met with nowadays. We talk a great deal of genius, fine language, improving our style, &c., but I am afraid solid learning is much wore out. Mr. Hume, I think, is a very proper person for a young man to cultivate an acquaintance with. Though he has not perhaps the most delicate taste, yet he has applied himself with great attention to the study of the ancients, and is likewise a great historian, so that you are not only entertained in his company, but may reap a great deal of useful instruction. I own myself much obliged to you, dear Sir, for procuring me the pleasure of his acquaintance.

Rapin goes on with me apace. I continue, thank God, in pretty good health and spirits.

You know I gave you a hint in my last of the continuance of my passion for Miss W——t.* I assure you I am excessively fond of her, so (as I have given you fair warning) don't be surprised if your grave, sedate, philosophic friend, who used to carry it so high, and talk with such a composed indifference of the beauteous sex, and whom you used to admonish not to turn an old man too soon,—don't be thunderstruck if this same fellow should all at once, *subito furore obreptus*, commence Don Quixote, for his adorable Dulcinea. But to talk seriously, I at first fell violently in love with her, and thought I should be quite miserable if I did not obtain her; but now it is changed to a rational esteem of her good qualities, so that I should be extremely happy to pass my life with her; but if she does not incline to it, I can bear it *æquo*

* The name of this young lady has escaped through Boswell's prudence in thus writing it. The loss is quite immaterial, especially as his "passion" subsided, very naturally, and she is not heard of again beyond the present chapter.

animo, and retire into the calm regions of philosophy. She is indeed extremely pretty, and possessed of every amiable qualification; she dances, sings, and plays upon several instruments equally well, draws with a great deal of taste, and reads the best authors; at the same time she has a just regard for true piety and religion, and behaves in the most easy, affable way. She is just such a young lady as I could wish for the partner of my soul; and you know that is not every one; for you and I have often talked how nice we would be in such a choice. I own I can have but little hopes, as she is a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. Heaven knows that sordid motive is farthest from my thoughts. She invited me to come and wait upon her, so I went last week and drank tea. I was kindly entertained, and desired to come when convenient. I have reason to believe she has a very good opinion of me: and, indeed, a youth of my turn has a better chance to gain the affections of a lady of her character than of any other; but (as I told you before) my mind is in such an agreeable situation, that being refused would not be so fatal as to drive me to despair, as your hot-brained romantic lovers talk. Now, my dear friend, I sincerely ask ten thousand pardons for giving you the trouble of this long narration; but as it is a thing that concerns me a good deal, I could not but communicate it to you, and I know, when I inform you how happy it makes me to open my mind, you will forgive me. Pray never speak of it: you are the only person knows of it, except Mr. Love,* who reads with her, and takes every unsus-

* This, we may presume, was "Mr. Love, of Drury Lane Theatre," and once "a player at Edinburgh," a gentleman with whom Boswell himself had studied, in order to purify his pronunciation from the Scotch accent. Johnson, it will be remembered, when Boswell referred to this training of his dialect, condescended

pected method to lend me his friendly assistance. Oh, Willie! how happy should I be if she consented, some years after this, to make me blest! How transporting to think of such a lady to entertain you at Auchinleck! However I am afraid you may too justly retort upon me Horace's advice to his friend,—

"Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum
Nimis * urgendo."

You must know I am vastly happy with the thoughts of the North Circuit; my worthy Mæcenas, Sir David Dalrymple, goes as Advocate Depute; there I will enjoy the happiness of his agreeable and improving conversation, and see the country with a double relish in such refined company. Pray write me on the 5th, which I will take as a particular favour, for we go to Auchinleck the week after next, and set out for the north soon after, so that our correspondence will be interrupted for some time. Let me know what your motions are intended to be, and whether or not you are going to Cambridge. Lord Auchinleck and my mother return their compliments.

Your affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

2] EDINBURGH, 16*th Dec.*, 1758.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your very kind and obliging letter gave me the greatest pleasure; and the more so as I have not been so happy as to hear from you for some time. The warm professions you make of the continuance of

to reply, "Sir, your pronunciation is not offensive," with which concession Boswell says he "was pretty well satisfied." (Boswell's "Johnson," March 1772.) The envoy thus curiously selected by Boswell was also manager of the Edinburgh Theatre at one time, as well as an actor and small dramatic author.

* [*Sic* in 1857 edition. Boswell quotes the same line rightly, p. 128.]

your friendship for me made me almost weep with joy, as I know them to be the genuine sentiments of your heart: even the compliments you are pleased to pay me I believe sincere.

Surely you could not be in earnest to entertain the least suspicion that your not writing should have offended me; no, my dear Sir, I am happily free of a jealous temper, and could form numberless excuses for the omission. It would be needless for me to describe what I have felt in absence from my better part; your beautiful and moving letter speaks my inmost thoughts. May indulgent Heaven grant a continuance of our friendship! As our minds improve in knowledge, may the sacred flame still increase, until at last we reach the glorious world above, when we shall never be separated, but enjoy an everlasting society of bliss! Such thoughts as these employ my happy moments, and make me

"Feel a secret joy
Spring o'er my heart, beyond the pride of kings."

I sympathise with you in the want of agreeable companions, as it is pretty much my own case. Poor Hamilton wrote me lately; he is still bad, but hopes to be soon here. Hepbairn has been confined for some days, but is almost well again. Both these are very pretty young gentlemen; but at the same time there is all the odds in the world between a companion and a friend to whom one can disclose every tender sentiment. I dare say it gives you much uneasiness to be amongst so profligate a set. I hope, by Divine assistance, you shall still preserve your amiable character amidst all the deceitful blandishments of vice and folly. I envy your happiness in being with the much-admired gentleman

you mention. The time seems to pass very agreeably at Cambridge.

I can assure you the study of the law here is a most laborious task. In return for yours I shall give you an account of my studies. From nine to ten I attend the law-class; from ten to eleven study at home; and from one to two attend a College upon Roman Antiquities; the afternoon and evening I likeways spend in study: I never walk except on Saturdays.

During the vacancy, in harvest, I went along with my father to the Northern Circuit, and was so happy as to be in the same chaise as Sir David Dalrymple the whole way. I kept an exact journal, at the particular desire of my friend Mr. Love, and sent it to him in sheets every post. He is really a man who, I must say, is my second-best friend. He has not only taste, genius, and learning, but a good heart, and thus prettily speaks in one of his poems:

> "Virtue and happiness unite in one,
> As light and heat both centre in the sun."

The poem you have obliged me with is very pretty; if it is done by an acquaintance, you are happy in knowing him, but I should imagine it the production of my friend: pray let me know if it is. To encourage you, I have enclosed a few trifles of my own. One of the Epigrams is a true story of Major Cochran (now Earl of Dundonald) and Mr. Webster, but this I tell you *inter nos*. I have published now and then the production of a leisure hour in the magazines. If any of these Essays can give entertainment to my friend, I shall be extremely happy.

My father and mother return your compliments in the best manner, and retain a just esteem for you.

Your most sincere and affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

Sir David Dalrymple mentioned above was appointed one of the Judges of Scotland in 1776, under the title of Lord Hailes. Boswell always expresses great affection and regard for him, and his name is frequently introduced into the "Life of Johnson." It occurs there chiefly through the officiousness of Boswell, who delighted to set his acquaintance upon writing or talking of each other. Dr. Johnson, for instance, is made on one occasion to do honour to the Judge by drinking a bumper to him, "as a man of worth, a scholar, and a wit." "I have, however," continued he to Boswell, "never heard of him except from you; but let him know my opinion of him, for, as he does not show himself much in the world, he should have the praise of the few who hear of him." Boswell indeed takes upon himself to affirm that Lord Hailes was "one of the best philologists in Great Britain, who has written papers in the 'World,' and a variety of other works in prose *and* English." What struck Boswell, however, as convincing evidence of his Lordship's "wonderful acumen" would not be the proof which perhaps other people might consider conclusive on the subject. It occurred on occasion of the Judge's "pointing out exactly," in an argument presented by Boswell to the Court of Session, of which Dr. Johnson had contributed a portion, what part had emanated from the Doctor's pen, and what was the lawyer's own production.

When Boswell's mind, many years after the date of the above letter, was troubled about settling his family estate, which he wished to entail on his heirs male, Dr. Johnson recommended him to tell his "whole mind" to Lord Hailes.* "He is, you know, both a Christian and a lawyer; I suppose he is above partiality and above loquacity." Boswell acted on this advice, and his Lordship "obligingly took the trouble to write" on the interesting topic, and gave his judgment *against* Boswell's view; but nothwithstanding his deep respect for the learned Judge, his "partiality for male succession in its full extent remained unshaken." He adds however the following generous and touching sentiment:—"Let me not be thought harsh or unkind to daughters, for *my notion is that they should be treated with affection and tenderness, and always participate of the property of the family.*"

* Letter to Boswell, Jan. 15, 1776.

It will be noted too that Boswell had already begun to keep an exact journal. Thus, doubtless, on the journey of the Circuit Sir David Dalrymple was unconsciously affording to the biographer of Johnson an opportunity of practising the art which he used to such perfection at a subsequent period.

The epigram referred to at the close of the letter "as a true story of Major Cochran," is lost, although it *may* possibly have been founded on the anecdote mentioned by Boswell in the "Life of Johnson" as a "little story of my early years, which was literally true," and which the Doctor used thus to tell:— "Boswell, in the year 1745, was a fine boy, wore a white cockade, and prayed for King James, till one of his uncles (General Cochran) gave him a shilling on condition that he would pray for King George, which he accordingly did. So you see," adds Boswell, "that Whigs of all ages are made the same way."

CHAPTER II

1761–1763

Attractions of London—Boswell's taste for the army—Distaste for fighting—Disgust for Scotland—His female friends—His poem, "The Club at Newmarket"—Correspondence with the Hon. Andrew Erskine.

NOTWITHSTANDING the ardent determination expressed three years before to prosecute this correspondence assiduously, it seems to have flagged; or if there were occasional letters written during the interval, their real value may have been duly estimated, and they were accordingly destroyed, or may have been accidentally lost.

The following letter, written in the spring of 1761, contains the oft-repeated assertion, so familiar to all readers of the great biography, "that Boswell's happiness was always centred in London." He had visited the Metropolis the previous year, and there, it would seem, became imbued "with the most gay ideas," which he thus enumerates:—"getting into the Guards, being about Court, enjoying the happiness of the *beau monde* and the company of men of genius." With respect to getting into the Guards, although Boswell was anxious to enter the army at this period, it was that he might strut in scarlet and gold and enjoy convivial life and congenial society, rather than that he might mingle in bloody war. He informs us indeed frankly, in his letter to the people of Scotland (1785), that he "is not blest with high heroick blood, but rather I think troubled with a natural timidity of personal danger, which it costs me some philosophy to overcome." But he adds, "I am persuaded I have so much real patriotism in my breast that I should not hesitate to draw my sword in your defence."

His martial aspirations however were relinquished, to the

great satisfaction of his father, whose judgment indeed in this matter received corroboration from another source; for Boswell narrates that, having been presented in the year 1760 to the Duke of Argyle, his Grace was much pleased with him, and "taking his father aside, said, 'My Lord, I like your son; this boy must not be shot at for three-and-sixpence a day.'" *

3] EDINBURGH, *1st May*, 1761.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I was favoured with yours some posts ago; I hope you received mine: they were written, it seems, on the same day.

It gave me infinite pleasure to find that you continue to regard me, and have still got as warm a concern for my interest as ever; but oh, my friend! how could you imagine that my esteem for you was in the smallest degree abated! Can you suppose my taste to be so depraved, my mind so degenerated, as not to love and respect so worthy an object! Indeed, my dear Temple, you wrong me; you are, and ever shall be, dear to Boswell, who reckons himself highly honoured by an intimacy with Mr. Temple, and, while he comforts himself with that, can calmly smile at the attacks of envy or of malevolence. I find that you have had a very disagreeable account of my conduct for some time by post. I flatter myself that the apologetic epistle, which I wrote you lately, may have put matters in a more favourable light. I grant you that my behaviour has not been entirely as it ought to be. A young fellow whose happiness was always centred in London, who had at least got there, and had begun to taste its delights, who had got his mind filled with the most gay ideas,—getting into the Guards, being about Court, enjoying the happiness of the *beau monde* and the company of men of genius, in short every-

* Boswelliana, in Philobiblion, vol. ii.

thing that he could wish,—consider this poor fellow hauled away to the town of Edinburgh, obliged to conform to every Scotch custom or be laughed at,—"Will you hae some jeel? oh fie! oh fie!"—his flighty imagination quite cramped, and he obliged to study Corpus Juris Civilis, and live in his father's strict family; is there any wonder, Sir, that the unlucky dog should be somewhat fretful? Yoke a Newmarket courser to a dung-cart, and I'll lay my life on't he'll either caper and kick most confoundedly, or be as stupid and restive as an old, battered posthorse. Not one in a hundred can understand this; you do.

Your insinuation about my being indelicate in the choice of my female friends, I must own, surprises me a good deal. Pray, what is the meaning of it?* . . . If there is anything more serious couched under your admonition, please to inform me; I will surely clear it up. I have sent you an epistle, which indolence has at length permitted me to finish. You may see by the date when it was begun. Write me soon, and believe me ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

The close of the next year (1762) saw Boswell again in his dear London, where Mr. Temple and he had probably frequent opportunities of meeting; and when, shortly afterwards, the latter was obliged to leave the Metropolis for Cambridge, he lent Boswell his chambers at Farrar's Buildings, in the Temple.

Boswell published, in 1762, a little poem, "The Cub at Newmarket." It does not seem to have had any great success, though probably all it merited; and indeed, having chronicled the fact of the publication of the poem, it should be added,

* The writer here enters upon detailed, but not very satisfactory extenuations of his conduct, into which it is not at all desirable to follow him.

perhaps, that its perusal will not repay any one, unless he may desire to satisfy a special curiosity as to what some persons *could* write and others *could* read, under the name of poetry, in the middle of the last century.

Boswell was also carrying on a "humorous" correspondence with the Honourable Andrew Erskine, which was published in 1763. These letters are very characteristic of Boswell, as well as illustrative of the tone affected in the society in which he at this time mingled. It is not so curious that such a series of letters, chiefly dedicated to personal banter, should have passed between two young associates, as that the writers should have allowed them to be given to the world. We may perhaps attribute their publication to Boswell's passion for notoriety at any cost. Rather than live unnoticed in society, he would incur its ridicule. It is clear indeed that he infinitely preferred being the object even of bitter contumely and satire to dwelling in the quiet of obscurity.

Some of the Erskine correspondence will be found at the end of this volume. It may serve to illustrate in some degree the mode of thought and the epistolary style adopted by young and gay *littérateurs* a century since.

CHAPTER III

1763

Makes the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson—Character of a true friend—Mr. Dempster—Criticism—Supper with Mr. Johnson—Boswell's new plan of life—The pensive Gray and the apothecary Gray—Bob Temple—Johnson on the art of study—Boswell on the advantages of adversity—Dr. Johnson's rooms in the Temple—Supper at the Turk's Head—Preparation for travel—Dr. Johnson accompanies him to Harwich—Writes him a letter of precepts.

THE year 1763 was to Boswell a memorable one; "for in it," says he,* "I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose Memoirs I am now writing—an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life" The amusing account of his first meeting with Dr. Johnson, "on Monday, the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour, after I had drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies," is one of those graphic accounts which will be found nowhere but in Boswell's wonderful work. The narrative tells us the whole story, however much to his disadvantage: how he was snubbed in all ways; how he was "stunned" by the Doctor's reply to his "light pleasantry" as to "coming from Scotland," but not being able to help it; how this "light pleasantry," he is willing to flatter himself, was "meant to soothe and conciliate" the great object of his admiration, and "not as a humiliating abasement at the expense of my country;" how, being "eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, 'Oh, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would

* "Life of Johnson," *anno* 1763.

grudge such a trifle to you'" (an order to the Play); how he was forthwith crushed by the prompt retort, "I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject;" how, feeling somewhat mortified, he yet "remained on the field, not wholly discomfited," and succeeded in picking up a page or two of the Doctor's talk; how gladly he gave credit to the wag Davies, the bookseller, when told by him, "Don't be uneasy, I can see Mr. Johnson likes you very well;" and how, gathering up courage enough in a few days to call on the "giant in his den," he is courteously received, and forthwith sticks resolutely by him (except when drawn off by some other passion) for the rest of the great man's life, that he may recount it. He however finds time still to write to his friend. The next letter is dated from Temple's chambers, which Boswell says he found very convenient on account of their contiguity to Dr. Johnson's.

4] INNER TEMPLE, *12th July*, 1763.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your very kind letter did me much good. I stood in need of it, I assure you. For the want of your conversation, and the want of one who could patiently hear mine, is no small want. I can indeed get people enough who are fond of my conversation when I am cheerful and lively and can contribute to their mirth; but nobody but a sincere friend can listen to my complaints when oppressed with melancholy. A true friend differs much from a companion. The latter loves some particular qualities which one has: the former loves the man himself,—loves him when gay and loves him when dejected. Such a friend, my dear Sir, I have the comfort to possess in you. Our friendship is now firmly established. By long separation we had a severe trial. Had not our regard been very well rooted, it might have died away, and other plants have sprung up in its place; but I thank Heaven that by our last meeting for some months in London, we have happily seen that we love each other as much as ever. I am now secure:

I dread not its continuance while we live, and I will not quit the hope of its lasting longer than this existence. I should have written to you before to-day, but have had a languor and absence of ideas; even now I am at a loss for a few sentences. I have given you the feelings of my heart, and I can find no help from my head. To atone for this, I send you my journal of last autumn, which may perhaps amuse you a little: you will laugh at my whim, and be sorry for my weakness. I insist on your showing it to nobody, and I beg that you may return it when you have read it. It may be sent in parcels, enclosed to "George Dempster, Esq., Member of Parliament, Manchester Buildings, Westminster." I have finished Hume's History. Bob is well and offers compliments. Claxton supped with us last night; I really like him much. I shall soon make you a better answer to your last.

I ever am your most sincere friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

Mr. Dempster here mentioned was, it will be remembered, the gentleman who, according to Boswell, was so struck "with the imperfect account I gave him of Dr. Johnson's conversation that, to his honour be it recorded, when I complained that drinking port and sitting up late with him affected my nerves for some time after, he said, 'One had better be palsied at eighteen than not keep company with such a man.'" He was confederated about this time with the Honourable Andrew Erskine and Boswell in writing a pamphlet in abuse of the tragedy of "Elvira," by Mallet. Both pamphlet and tragedy are gone whither many such productions have gone, and still will go; but, having been the occasion of a remark by Dr. Johnson, reported by Boswell, the fact of their existence happens to be preserved by this circumstance. The remark was to the effect that a man has a clear right to criticise a work though he could not himself have produced it. It has been said also by some

one else, when rebuked in like manner for condemning a book which, it was alleged, he could not have written as well, "But I could have done better; I *could have left it alone.*" In this case Dempster, it would seem, according to the Boswellian narrative, had relented with respect to the part he played in writing these "critical strictures," and, having some qualms of conscience, candidly said, "We have hardly a right to abuse this tragedy, for, bad as it is, how vain would either of us be to write one not near so good!" *Johnson:* "Why no, Sir; this is not just reasoning. You *may* abuse a tragedy, though you cannot make one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though *you* cannot make a table: it is not your trade to make tables."

In the following letter will be found Boswell's announcement to his friend that he had "the honour of supping *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Johnson." This supper, with the conversation which took place during the repast, will be found in its proper place in the "Life of Johnson." The supper was at the "Mitre," and Boswell says, "It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some commonplace observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned, adding, however, that it was good for the vegetable creation." * The remark is perhaps a very good sample of Boswell's share in his dialogues with Johnson: and it will be a never-ceasing source of wonder how a man who, according to his own account, rarely speaks anything but what is more or less weak, commonplace, and foolish, could understand, remember, and record the eloquence and wisdom of others.

We find Boswell now writing to his friend about the "plan of life" which, for a time, was to separate him from the beloved London and the beworshipped Doctor. The plan of life was "a resolution of some importance to him." "I had," says he elsewhere, "in compliance with my father's wishes, agreed to study the Law, and was soon to set out for Utrecht to hear the lectures of an excellent civilian in that University, and then to proceed on my travels." Probably his father had heard that his son was not pursuing a very

* "Life of Johnson": see also on the 26th of July, when Boswell again fell upon the weather and the Doctor again fell upon him for so doing.

steady path, from persons well informed on the matter, and who might have—

> "wondered that his Lordship
> Would suffer him to spend his youth at home;
> While other men of slender reputation
> Put forth their sons to seek preferment out,
> Some to the University."

5] INNER TEMPLE, *14th July*, 1763.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—When my last letter was written (or rather writing) I was exceedingly dull, not melancholy, but merely stupid. I dare say my letter would show that plainly, and I dare say you have expected an atonement for it before now.

Well can I imagine the feelings which you describe upon your returning to Cambridge. Mine were very similar when I found myself in the country after being in London. The animal spirits, accustomed to be put in motion by the variety of bustling life, must be flat and torpid in the stillness of retirement. Habit, to be sure, is of great influence; but our minds are surely somewhat different in their original composition. Some people can support retirement, and others are miserable without society; and yet the minds of these people have been cultivated, or allowed to remain uncultivated, in the same degree. For my own part, retirement has always sunk my spirits; and I cannot say that I ever had any uneasy sensations upon coming to town, although I had not been accustomed to a town for some time. What is remarkable in my case is, that I am not fond of much society, but, on the contrary, choose to live a good deal by myself. But then in London you can either have or want company, just as you please, so that you enjoy perfect freedom; and if any style of living you may be in is disagreeable to you, you have the comfort to think that it will not be long

ere you get rid of it, and pursue any other plan which you may find to be most agreeable.

Your portrait of a fellow of college is certainly just; however there are, no doubt, exceptions. There are many of them, I suppose, men of genius and elegance. You surprise me a good deal when you tell me that Mr. Gray says he never saw Mr. Ogilvie: there must be some strange mistake. I fancy Mr. Gray has either said so, a good time ago, before Mr. Ogilvie was at Cambridge, or perhaps there may be another Mr. Gray whom he has been introduced to, instead of the *pensive Gray*. I asked Ogilvie yesterday, and he is positive he was introduced to Mr. Gray by a fellow of "Kings," whose name he has forgot. He says he never doubted his being with the author of the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," although he owns that they did not speak a word about poetry. He says they were some hours together in the best inn at Cambridge. I wish you would take the trouble to find out how the affair has really happened, and let me know.*

I have been much in my dissipated way since you went away. I have only finished Hume, and read Harris on Happiness, which is very sensible and accurate; but I cannot help thinking that he had better have given us it in the form of an essay, as he has treated of poetry, painting, and music. The dialogue which he has chosen is, in my opinion, a disadvantage. A young lady who looked at it said, "If this man had all the sense in the world, it would do me no good, for I could not attend to it for laughing." And indeed

* This mistaking Mr. Gray (an apothecary) at a public-house for Gray the poet, and the curious zeal which Boswell shows for getting to the bottom of such an insignificant fact, are characteristic traits of character. The Mr. Ogilvie here spoken of is often referred to in the "Life of Johnson."

a frequent repetition of "said he" and "I replied" is somewhat awkward and ludicrous. You must excuse this critical pleasantry on one of your favourite writers. I must say this for him, that I rose from reading his dialogue happier and more disposed to follow virtue.

July 15th.—I began this letter yesterday, but was prevented from finishing it by some little accidents. The longer I talk to you in this way, so much the better will it be for me. I have had a long letter from my father, full of affection and good counsel. Honest man! he is now very happy: it is amazing to think how much he has had at heart my pursuing the road of civil life; he is anxious for fear I should fall off from my prudent system, and return to my dissipated, unsettled way of thinking; and, in order to make him easy, he insists on having my solemn promise that I will persist in the scheme on which he is so earnestly bent: he knows my fidelity, and he concludes that my promise will fix me. Indeed he is much in the right; the only question is, how much I am to promise. I think I may promise thus much: that I shall from this time study propriety of conduct, and to be a man of knowledge and prudence, as far as I can; that I shall make as much improvement as possible while I am abroad, and when I return shall put on the gown as a member of the Faculty of Advocates, and be upon the footing of a gentleman of business, with a view to my getting into Parliament. My father talks of my setting out soon, but says he will soon write to me fixing my allowance; I imagine therefore that I shall go the week after next. I feel no small reluctance at leaving this great Metropolis, which I heartily agree with you is the best place in the world to live in. My dear friend, I find that London must be the place where I shall pass a great part of my life, if I wish to pass it with

satisfaction. I hope we shall spend many happy years there, when we are both settled as to views of life and habits of living; in the meantime, let me endeavour to acquire steadiness and constant propriety of conduct, without which we never can enjoy what I fondly hope for.

The great Robert * continues as great as ever; he displays that vigour of genius and intense application for which he is so famous,—in washing his face and brushing his hat, which he will execute in a few hours: and he has lately shown a *coup de maître* in washing some old ribbons, so as to make them look every bit as well as when they were new. Poor Bob is a pretty, genteel, lively boy; but you must make him acquire some more knowledge, else his stock will soon be exhausted. I find it somewhat inconvenient to have anybody in chambers with me. I wish you had him down at Cambridge with you. However we are very good friends, only I have unluckily allowed him to be too free with me; and I own it hurts me when I find my folly bringing me into the situation of being upon an equality with, if not below, the young man. However, when I return from abroad you shall see a change for the better.†

I had the honour of supping *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Johnson last night; by the bye, I need not have used a French phrase. We sat till between two and three. He took me by the hand cordially and said, "My dear Boswell, I love you very much." Now, Temple, can I help indulging vanity? Sir David Dalrymple

* A younger brother of Mr. Temple.

† This *naïve* confession of Boswell is doubtless true: he is often seen letting himself down naturally; and on finding his vanity somewhat hurt thereby, he tries to raise himself again rather awkwardly and unsuccessfully.

says to me, in his last letter, "It gives me pleasure to think that you have obtained the friendship of Mr. Samuel Johnson: he is one of the best moral writers which England has produced. At the same time I envy you the free and undisguised converse with such a man. I beg you to present my best respects to him, and to assure him of the veneration which I entertain for the author of the 'Rambler' and of 'Rasselas.'" In 'Rasselas' you will see a tender-hearted operator, who probes the wound only to heal it. Swift, on the contrary, mangles human nature; he cuts and slashes as if he took pleasure in the operation, like the tyrant who said, *Ita feri, ut se sentiat emori.*" *

Mr. Johnson was in vast good humour, and we had much conversation. I mentioned Fresnoy to him, but he advised me not to follow a plan, and he declared that he himself never followed one above two days. He advised me to read just as inclination prompted me, which alone he said would do me any good; for I had better go into company than read a set task. Let us study ever so much, we must still be ignorant of a good deal. Therefore the question is, what parts of science do we want to know? He said, too, that idleness was a distemper which I ought to combat against, and that I should prescribe to myself five hours a day, and in these hours gratify whatever literary desires may spring up.† He is to give

* This passage of Sir David's letter was the one which Boswell read to, and which, as he says, "gratified Dr. Johnson." It was the return for the compliments which we have seen Boswell had procured for Sir David from Dr. Johnson.

† "No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en,
In brief, Sir, study what you most affect."
Taming of the Shrew.

me his advice as to what books I should take with me from England. I told him that the "Rambler" shall accompany me round Europe, and so be a Rambler indeed: he gave me a smile of complacency.

My dear friend, I ever am
Yours most sincerely,
JAMES BOSWELL.

The above disquisitions upon the follies of youth, and the characteristics of his friend "Bob," have a peculiar value, coming as they do from the poor Boswell whose infirmities in some respects resemble those he attributes to and laments over in Bob.

Reference will be found in several passages in the ensuing letter to the difficulties into which Mr. Temple's father fell. They are only preserved here inasmuch as they were the occasion (as will be seen presently) of a curious application being made to Sir A. Mitchell on behalf of Temple's family by Boswell, which at all events was creditable to his kindness of heart.* Boswell undertook also to write letters of comfort and moral wisdom to his unfortunate friend; one of which is as follows.

6] INNER TEMPLE, *19th July*, 1763.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is a kind of established rule, in writing letters, to begin with acknowledging the receipt of our correspondent's last favours. I should have done so just now were it not for an antipathy of established rules, which I have not yet altogether got the better of. You pay me some genteel compliments on the pleasure which my letters gave you. I could return you them fourfold; for I give you my honest word that even glittering guineas do not give me more pleasure. As I have now vanquished my demon of narrowness, the assertion is not near so strong as it would have been not many weeks ago.

The enclosed letter from your father came to hand

* See p. 43, letter 14.

yesterday. I took the liberty to open it, being anxious to know what he had done in your affairs. I was surprised to find that he does not say a word in answer to your proposal that he should go abroad, and I think he seems too much inclined to delay. You will understand all the circumstances which he mentions better than I could. I wish from my soul that matters were settled, as you could know clearly how much you have to depend upon. You have indeed, my friend, been very unfortunate at your entry into life; but your bad fortune has served as a touchstone to try your virtue, —of the power of which neither your friends nor even yourself could be so fully convinced had prosperity beamed upon you with unclouded ray. This is very good after-reasoning; but I fancy there are few philosophers who would court adversity merely to be convinced how well they could behave. However, my friend, it is certainly true philosophy to submit to the will of Heaven, and to fulfil the amiable duties of morality.

Bob has been obliged to go down to Salisbury to attend the Assizes, where the appeal from the court-martial of his regiment is to be tried. His expenses are to be borne out of the regimental money: Cambers, their attorney, supplied him. He went down upon Sunday. I accompanied him to Hounslow, and returned to town in the return-chaise. Bob and I were better together the last two days; he will do very well. I have introduced him at Mr. Dempster's; we breakfasted there on Saturday. Dempster and Miss Dempster are both very fond of him. I have now had full and free possession of the chambers; I like them much: it is the best way for a single man to live that I can imagine.

I was with Mr. Johnson to-day. I was in his garret,

up four pair of stairs; it is very airy, commands a view of St. Paul's and many a brick roof. He has many good books, but they are all lying in confusion and dust.

I ever am your sincere friend,
JAMES BOSWELL.

The inspection of Dr. Johnson's rooms in Inner Temple Lane, mentioned in this letter, was performed under the auspices of the Doctor's humble friend, Robert Levett, and is thus described by Boswell in his "Life:"—"Mr. Levett this day showed me Dr. Johnson's library, which was contained in two garrets over his chambers, where Lintot, son of the celebrated bookseller of that name, had formerly his warehouse. I found a number of good books, but very dusty, and in great confusion. The floor was strewed with manuscript leaves in Johnson's own handwriting, which I beheld with a degree of veneration, supposing they might contain portions of the 'Rambler' or 'Rasselas.' I observed an apparatus for chemical experiments, of which Johnson was all his life very fond. The place seemed very favourable for retirement and meditation. Johnson told me that he went up thither without mentioning it to his servant when he wanted to study secure from interruption, for he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was. 'A servant's strict regard for the truth,' said he, 'must be weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know that it is merely a form of denial, but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for *me*, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for *himself?*'" "Johnson's Staircase" is a well-known place within the precincts of the Temple, and the garrets referred to are now occupied by a laundress.*

A certain ambiguous sentence in the "Life of Johnson,"

* It should perhaps be mentioned, that it is understood to be a fact that a *laundress* in the Temple is not necessarily a *washer* of anything, so that the apartments need not be figured to the sensitive reader's mind as now dedicated to linen and the smell of soapsuds.

and which has employed some editorial ingenuity, is perhaps elucidated by the following letter. It is simply a question of who was the person "mentioned" by Boswell and abused by Johnson, during a conversation recorded by the faithful biographer. The passage runs thus: "*Of a gentleman who was mentioned* Dr. Johnson said, 'I have not met with any man for a long time who has given me such general displeasure. He is totally unfixed in his principles, and wants to puzzle other people.' I said, 'his principles had been poisoned by a noted infidel writer, but that he was nevertheless a benevolent, good man;' whereupon Johnson of course dilated all the more to the disadvantage of the 'gentleman,' and said he should not like to trust him with money or with young ladies, for then there is always temptation.'" Then the Doctor proceeds from the "gentleman" to Hume and other sceptics, of whom he says, they are "vain men," and that as truth would not afford sufficient food to their vanity, they betook themselves to error. "Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull." Mr. Croker inferred in his note that Dempster was the "gentleman" who was thus introduced by his friend Boswell to be criticised, and the following letter corroborates the supposition.

The supper which preceded, and indeed produced the conversation in question, took place on the 20th of July, and an account of it is given at length in the "Life."

7] INNER TEMPLE, *23rd July*, 1763.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Would it not be absurd if you and I should stand upon ceremony in our correspondence? I think our best way is just to write to each other whenever we feel an inclination to say something. When we are together we never think of parcelling out our sentences in a reciprocal proportion; at least, I dare say I speak three sentences for one of yours; why then should I think that written conversation should be managed so very differently? In reality I do not think so; and my writing this before I have an answer to my last is a proof of my opinion. Indeed

I must observe that, to an indolent man, conversation is so much easier than writing that he will gladly seize a large portion of the former, but with reluctance contribute his share of the latter; and hence it is that we see so many awkward and ridiculous excuses of hurry and a thousand other things, which, although they have already been heartily laughed at, can still present themselves with some degree of confidence.

On Wednesday evening Mr. Johnson, Dempster, and my uncle, Dr. Boswell, supped with me at my chambers. I had prodigious satisfaction to find Dempster's sophistry (which he has learnt from Hume and Rousseau) vanquished by the solid sense and vigorous reasoning of Johnson. It was a very fertile evening, and my journal is stored with its fruits. Dempster was as happy as a vanquished argumentator could be; and the honest Doctor was cheerful and conversible and highly entertained.

Last night Mr. Johnson and I supped together at the Turk's Head Coffee-house: he was extremely entertaining and instructive. I learn more from him than from any man I ever was with. He told me a very odd thing,—that he knew at eighteen as much as he does now; that is to say, his judgment is much stronger, but he had then stored up almost all the facts that he has now, and he says that he has led but an idle life; only think, Temple, of that! He advised me by all means to study, or, as he expressed it, to ply my book while I was young, for that then was the time for acquiring knowledge. He is to correspond with me wherever I am, and he said, "My dear Boswell, it would give me great pain to part with you if I thought we were not to meet again."

Master Robert is returned. I have been writing a pleasant ditty upon him:

TUNE, *Nancy Dawson.*

Bob Temple has at Sarum been,
And all the pretty girls has seen ;
But he came back in the machine,
Because he was the barber.

From Mother Bowles he got good wine ;
He lick'd his lips and call'd it fine ;
But now the dog at Cliff's must dine,
And is not that the barber ?

He talks of getting his money and going to Cambridge on Tuesday. I wish he may : I shall be better in chambers by myself, and Robert (to use the phrase of the celebrated Mrs. Legge) is too much of a self-lover. He has kept the snug room to himself. I humbled poor 'Gilvie finely with telling him of Gray the apothecary.* Morris † called and delivered your letter : I am to pass an evening at his lodgings soon. Clack supped with me on Tuesday. I have heard again from Scotland, but my time for departure is not yet fixed. Believe me, my dear Temple, to be

Most sincerely yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

8] INNER TEMPLE, *25th July*, 1763.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—This comes to you by Bob, who has cheerfully consented to go down to Cambridge. He has been very eager to get back the ring, but the little cunning gipsy still keeps it : she is a deceitful little jade ; she ought to be whipped.

Bob has paid the tailor's bill of small articles ; it

* Referring to Mr. Ogilvie's mistake in fancying that he had met Gray the poet at an inn in Cambridge (see *ante*, p. 24).

† Probably Corbyn Morris, the author of an "Essay on Wit, Humour, and Ridicule."

comes to eleven shillings: this has reduced him again, so I have (or rather, am to) let him have another guinea. Love is to breakfast with me to-morrow. I hope I shall get him to pay me up some more of what he owes me. Pray is a *pay up* an English phrase? I know *pay down* is. But they may both express the same thing, just as downright and upright both signify honest. I have this night received a large packet from my father, with my letter of credit, and several letters of recommendation to different people in Holland. The letters have been sent open for me to seal, so I have been amused to see the different modes of treating that favourite subject *myself*. Sir David Dalrymple has written to Count Nassau: his letter is in French, and is exceedingly genteel. He recommends Mr. Boswell as *un jeune homme de famille et de mérite*, and hopes he will find in the Count *le guide et le protecteur de sa jeunesse*. My father writes to Mynheer Abrahamus Gronovius, an old Literatus at Leyden: it is an excellent letter, and recalls their old ideas with more liveliness than you would imagine. I have several other letters, so that I can be at no loss where I am going, especially as I have got some relations of the first fashion at the Hague. My father has allowed me £60 a quarter,—£240 a year: that is not a great allowance, but with economy I may live very well upon it, for Holland is a cheap country. However I am determined not to be straitened, nor to encourage the least narrowness of disposition as to saving money, but will draw upon my father for any sums I find necessary. My affairs being thus far settled, I must set out soon. I can have no excuse for indulging myself in a much longer stay in London; and yet I must own to you, my dear friend, that I feel a good deal of uneasiness at the thoughts of quitting the place

where my affection is truly centred, for there I enjoy most happiness: however I am determined to go next week. I hope I shall not be feeble-minded, but pluck up manly resolution, and consider that I am leaving London in order to see the world, store my mind with more ideas, establish a proper character, and then return to the Metropolis much happier, and more qualified for a solid relish of its advantages.

Mr. Wilkes is gone to France. He was so good as to let me have half-a-dozen franks to astonish a few staunch North Britons. I told him I was to be at Utrecht next winter; he said, "If you will write to me in George Street, I will send you the detail of this country;" this was very obliging, it would be a vast treasure; but I don't know if it would be proper to keep a correspondence with a gentlemen in his present capacity. It was a great honour to me his offering it; I must be proud: advise me fully about it, and believe me ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—I have sat up all night writing letters to Scotch Judges and relations. Bob will certainly be with you on Thursday.

9] INNER TEMPLE, *26th July*, 1763.

MY DEAR SIR,—The light in which you represent your affairs is a very disagreeable one, and gives me very great concern. The suspected attorney is a sad circumstance; but it is lucky that you are on your guard, and so may prevent him from doing you material hurt without a discovery. Your father's indolence, and even inattention, I can see is very great. It is amazing how he should never once have mentioned a subject which you wrote so explicitly and so strongly of; I cannot understand it; he surely could not mean

to shuffle the thing off cunningly, and yet his indolence (if you suppose this to be owing to indolence alone) must be inconceivably great. One would think that his own interest, and the interest of those who are most dear to him, might rouse him from this apathy. It is unlucky that Mr. Compton is a man of the same temper, even in a higher degree: they will encourage each other to be easy and keep their minds serene. I wish you would write to your father again, and in the same way that you formerly did. Represent to him how severe it is upon you to remain in this uncertain situation, and beseech him to exert himself so as to get matters settled either one way or another. Patterson is such a dog that you should endeavour to prevent him from taking any advantage of your misfortunes, which, upon this as well as other occasions, he seems strongly inclined to do. In short, my dear Temple, I am at a loss how to advise you; but you may believe that I am most warmly concerned for your welfare, and shall be anxious to hear from time to time how your affairs go on, till they are brought to a happy conclusion: for I will not offend you with the legal word *issue*. Pray keep up your spirits, and pray push your father to despatch. Do not despond. Your virtue cannot go unrewarded either in this or another world; but as weak mortals must have sure comfort to support them in this world, reflect, my friend, that you have sure comfort; you have true friends,—you have Nicholls and Boswell, whom you may look upon as parts of yourself. Consider this is an exalted comfort which few enjoy, although they have many of the shining gifts of fortune. Which, pray, would you in your heart prefer? Remember me to Nicholls with the remembrance of esteem: I hope to be much better and much longer acquainted with him.

As to poor Bob, I am sorry to tell you that the blundering fellow Barry was in a mistake in saying that any money was due to him. Mr. Adie, the agent's head clerk, has shown him his accounts, by which it appears there is not a farthing due. This is a most unlucky circumstance; however, I think Bob has nothing now to keep him longer in London, so I have advised him to go down in the Cambridge Fly on Thursday. I am at present very poor, so cannot do what I could wish; however I have let him have another guinea, which will discharge some trifling debts and carry him down. Mrs. Legge and the barber must wait a little. You will be wanting money by this time; I will try and get some more of my debt recovered and send it to you. I was with Adie to-day, and had the account from himself.

I ever am yours sincerely,

JAMES BOSWELL.

In the following letter of 27th July there is another amusing "analysis" of poor Bob's character, which, as coming from Boswell (who for this purpose plants himself on a moral elevation), has a somewhat comical effect. It is hardly necessary to observe that this letter is not printed on account of its intrinsic wisdom—a remark which will also apply to many others which succeed. It presents however one of the many instances of Boswell's kindness, which he felt for his friend when suffering from difficulties and family annoyances.

10] INNER TEMPLE, *27th July*, 1763.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I am really very uneasy on your brother's account; in the first place, as I am sorry to see a fellow-creature in so much danger; and in the next place, as his behaviour cannot fail to be a great cause of unhappiness to you, my worthy friend, whose happiness is most sincerely wished for by me. No

recent false step has led me to make this dispiriting exordium; but as he is going to leave me, I feel a strong desire to write to you about him. I have studied his character thoroughly; and by putting myself quite on a footing with him, I have had an opportunity of knowing him perfectly. He has no great powers either of understanding or imagination, so that he has not been designed by nature for a man who should make a shining figure. At the same time he has got a good share of sense and spirit, which, as things go, may carry a man very well through life, perhaps better than higher qualities will. It is however somewhat unlucky for him that he has got an exceeding easy and heedless disposition, which has led him into many difficulties, and which prevents him from feeling the consequences of these difficulties so severely as he ought to do. He is good-humoured and void of malevolence; but he has not the generosity one could wish. He is very selfish. I am afraid his principles of virtue are not firmly fixed, though he has a high idea of honour. Have I not analysed his character pretty well? I could give you instances of the truth of every article. I imagine you yourself either have been or may be convinced from the same good authority. I really have a liking for Bob, and wish very much to see him do well. As he has got so able and willing a friend as General Crawfurd, I hope he will rise in the army, if his extravagance does not ruin him. Too quick a rise, while he is so very young, might do him harm; and therefore his coming in again as lieutenant upon full pay, and remaining some time in that situation, will be best for him. This looks like a paradox, but I imagine it is just. Were he to get a Company just now, he would immediately have a servant and a couple of horses (as he talks), and this would give him

such ideas of his consequence that he would enlarge his expenses in every other article, and so would get into debt worse than ever.

Therefore, my friend, by no means think of purchasing a Company for him, at least till after some years of trial you can depend upon his prudent conduct. Were you to buy one for him just now, you would by that means risk a thousand pounds on the uncertain conduct of a giddy youth; and were he again to be in distress, you would be deprived, in a great measure, of the means of relieving him. Leave him to the General, and see what he will do for him; and at the same time see how Bob behaves. Commissions can never be dearer than they are now; and you will have your money ready to buy a Company for him if you find that he waits long for preferment without money. However, I must observe that supposing him to wait seven years, a young man even of very good interest who gets a Company at twenty-four is reckoned very lucky; but he may have it sooner if he behaves properly. I am glad that he goes down to Cambridge. His going thither removes him from the dissipation and vice which idleness is apt to drive a young man to in a metropolis; and by want of gay amusements, and by seeing good example, he may acquire a habit of study and reflection that may be of use to him as long as he lives. Encourage him in the notion that he is now laying the foundation of being a happy and well-esteemed officer. I would not have you push him to a formal plan of reading, at least for some time, as he might be disgusted at so irksome an idea. Be satisfied at first if books should only serve (as they say with respect to children) to keep him out of mischief; and if he acquires even a relish of reading merely for amusement, it is a great deal gained. Above

all, do what you can to establish him in solid notions of religion and morality. My dear friend, I wish these hints may be of any use; you know they come from a sincere friend when they come from

JAMES BOSWELL.

Boswell is now prepared for his departure for Utrecht and his travels. He has read the letters of introduction with which he is provided, to see how he is described; he has meditated upon his allowance of £240 a year, and has resolved that, in order not to encourage a "narrow" disposition, he will draw on his father for any sums he finds necessary. He then sheds a tear of regret upon leaving the certain joys of Fleet Street for the problematical pleasures of foreign cities. But there is one great gratification in store for the *jeune homme de famille et de mérite*; "Would you believe it," says he, "Mr. Johnson's friendship for me is so great that he insists on seeing me sail, and has actually taken a place in the coach to accompany me to Harwich." Accordingly to Harwich they went, and, as Boswell tells us, "My revered friend walked down with me to the beach, where we embraced and parted with tenderness, and engaged to correspond by letters. I said, 'I hope, Sir, you will not forget me in my absence.' Johnson: 'Nay, Sir, it is more likely you should forget me than that I should forget you.' As the vessel put out to sea I kept my eyes upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner; and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, and he disappeared." We have just seen a description by Boswell of his friend Bob's character; we may now perhaps glance at the picture of Boswell's by Dr. Johnson, in a letter written to him at Utrecht, dated December 8, 1763, which, both for its own merits and as containing the Doctor's view at this time, and after a very short acquaintance of his correspondent's character and habits, should perhaps be here presented.*

"There lurks perhaps in every human heart a desire of distinction, which inclines every man first to hope and then to believe that nature has given him something peculiar to himself.

* See "Life of Johnson," *anno* 1763.

This vanity makes one mind nurse aversion, and another actuate desires, till they rise by art much above their original state of power; and as affectation in time improves to habit, they at last tyrannize over him who at first encouraged them only for show. Every desire is a viper in the bosom, who while he was chill was harmless, but when warmth gave him strength he exerted his poison. You know a gentleman * who when first he set his foot in the gay world, as he prepared himself to whirl in the vortex of pleasure, imagined a total indifference and a universal negligence to be the most agreeable concomitants of youth, and the strongest indication of an airy temper and a quick apprehension. Vacant to every object and sensible of every impulse, he thought that all appearance or diligence would deduct something from the reputation of genius, and hoped that he should appear to attain, amidst all the ease of carelessness and all the tumult of diversion, that knowledge and those accomplishments which mortals of the common fabric obtain only by mute abstraction and solitary drudgery. He tried this scheme of life awhile, was made weary of it by his sense and his virtue; he then wished to return to his studies, and finding long habits of idleness and pleasure harder to be cured than he expected, still willing to retain his claim to some extraordinary prerogatives, resolved the common consequences of irregularity into an unalterable degree of destiny, and concluded that nature had originally formed him incapable of rational employment. Let all such fancies, illusive and destructive, be banished henceforward from your thoughts for ever. Resolve, and keep your resolution; choose, and pursue your choice."

This letter, which would have been valuable if Boswell had acted upon its precepts, was not followed by others during the next two years, although he tells us that he wrote to his revered friend on fitting occasions. However, on Boswell's return the Doctor did write a flattering letter, saying that as "apologies for such neglect are seldom of any use," he therefore makes none, and so closes the subject; and nothing more was heard about the poor biographer's chagrin at having had no more letters.

* Of course the description which here follows applies to Boswell himself.

11] INNER TEMPLE, *28th July*, 1763.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I have now fixed to-morrow se'nnight, Friday the 5th of August, for the day of my departure; and on Saturday, the 6th, I shall be upon the Channel. Alas, my friend! let me disclose my weakness to you. My departure fills me with a kind of gloom that quite overshadows my mind. I could almost weep to think of leaving dear London and the calm refinement of the Inner Temple. I am now launching into the wide world, and am to be long at a distance from my dear Temple, whose kind and amiable counsel never failed to soothe my dejected mind. You may see I am somewhat melancholy; pray comfort me. This is very effeminate and very young, but I cannot help it. My time is fixed, and I will go; I have taken my resolution, and you shall see that I can keep to it.

I enclose you a friendly dissertation, which you may read at your leisure; it will show how much stronger my mind was last night only. I am just going to meet Mr. Johnson at the Turk's Head.* My kind service to Bob.

Yours ever, with most sincere affection,

JAMES BOSWELL.

12] INNER TEMPLE, *3rd August*, 1763.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your last letter is from a man in that dejection of spirits which both you and I are unhappily subject to; all things appear dismal then, and reason no longer bears sway. My dear friend, let us mutually relieve and comfort each other in these darksome hours; and let this be your constant solace, as it is always mine, that true friendship such as ours will ever last, and will ever render us sensible to each other's distress of every kind; and surely we are both very much

* Duly chronicled in the Seventeenth Chapter of the "Life of Johnson."

mistaken if either of us should want assistance of any kind which the other would not cheerfully give. "Give" is a bad word, it makes too great a difference between us, who should consider ourselves as one person.

I hope in God your affairs will be settled in such a way that you shall be able to live comfortably. Pray, my friend, do not indulge gloomy thoughts. Let pleasing study and meditation amuse your mind, and relieve yourself by thinking on your absent friend, who shall often think of you, and when he returns shall be most cordially connected with you. To-morrow morning, at five o'clock, I set out upon my travels. I am much hurried with putting all my things in order. I have left some parcels in one of the drawers, which I beg you may keep for me till I return. I have been a great deal with Mr. Johnson of late, and (would you believe it?) his friendship for me is so great that he insists on seeing me sail, and has actually taken a place in the coach to accompany me to Harwich.

I am quite hurried and confused to-night; however, I shall go with rational and agreeable views of improvement, and hope to return much better than when I went away. I like your present of Mason's Poems exceedingly, and shall take it only, as Horace can be had everywhere. Mr. Gray's Poems will be left for you with Mr. Edwards. And now, my dear Temple, God bless you! I am going far away, and for a long time, but let us correspond frequently, and so make the time seem shorter. Remember me kindly to Nicholls and Bob. Farewell!

I ever am yours, with sincere regard,

JAMES BOSWELL.

From the date of the above letter to February, 1766, Boswell was abroad, and none of his letters to Temple, if any were written, have been preserved; how the interval of time was spent will be seen presently.

CHAPTER IV

1764–1767

Studies at Utrecht—Letter to Sir Andrew Mitchell—Boswell's "spirited tour"—Visits Voltaire and Rousseau—Corsica—Pascal Paoli—Corsican History and Journal—Walpole's and Gray's criticism—Dedication of the book—Visit to Mr. Pitt—Correspondence with Temple resumed—Boswell on the clerical character and bachelorship—Marriage—Progress in the law—Contemplates matrimony—Zelide—A Scotch lass—Writes to Lord Chatham—The Douglas cause—Professional business—Miss Blair—Rough notes for a conversation—Temple marries.

A WINTER was devoted by Boswell to Utrecht; how much to study, and how much to various dissipations, need not form matter of deep speculation. He then proceeded on his travels, visiting Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Corsica, Paris, and returned early in 1766 to London.

Two letters of Boswell, written during this foreign tour to Sir Andrew Mitchell, have been published, and will be found in the interesting Memoir of that Minister. As the editor of the work mentioned below remarks,* these letters are very characteristic of Boswell;† and he adds, that "Boswell's father, the Lord Auchinleck, so well known to all readers of the most entertaining biography on record, seems to have been

* Memoirs and Papers of Sir Andrew Mitchell, K.B., Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the Court of Great Britain to the Court of Prussia from 1756 to 1771, edited by Andrew Bisset, Esq., vol. ii. p. 381.

† The reader will moreover perceive that the second letter to Sir Andrew bears upon the matter of the Temple family, for whom Boswell interests himself.

pretty much of the opinion of Lord Burleigh on the subject of foreign travel, who, in his letter of advice to his son, says, 'Suffer not thy sons to pass the Alps, for they shall have nothing there but pride, blasphemy, and atheism. And if they travel, they get a few broken languages that shall profit them nothing more than to have one meat served in diverse dishes.'" These letters are here subjoined.

MR. BOSWELL TO MR. MITCHELL.

13] *28th August*, 1764.

You may believe, Sir, that I was a good deal surprised to hear upon my return to Berlin that *onze Gezant** was gone. There was indeed a surmise at Brunswick that you intended to return to England this season. I was asked if it was true, and very innocently affirmed that there was nothing in it. I find however that when a man leaves a Minister at a foreign Court but for a fortnight, he is not sure of finding him upon his return. Your departure is a good deal unlucky for me, not only as it deprives me of conversation which gave me uncommon pleasure, and invariably accustomed me to rational thinking and honourable sentiment, but because I now particularly stand in need of your prudent and kind counsel with respect to my travels. I have had another letter from my father, in which he continues of opinion that travelling is of very little use, and may do a great deal of harm. I shall not repeat what I have formerly said of my father's particular character; I say *particular*, for rarely will you find a man of so excellent a frame of body and so noble a mind as to have passed through life with uniform propriety of conduct.† For my own part, I own that I am not such a favourite of nature. Think

* Dutch for "our Envoy."

† The sense of this compliment is not very obvious.

not that I intend to plead machinery, and escape from the censure due to the faults which I have committed. I only would have you consider that judgment is a natural gift, as well as imagination and force of mind is in a great measure independent of our endeavours: think of me as I am, and pronounce accordingly. I esteem and love my father, and I am determined to do what is in my power to make him easy and happy; but you will allow that I may endeavour to make him happy and *at the same time not be too hard upon myself.* I must use you so much with the freedom of a friend as to tell you that, with the vivacity which you allowed me, I have a melancholy disposition. To escape from the gloom of dark speculation, I have made excursions into the fields of amusement, perhaps of folly. I have found that amusement and folly are beneath me, and that without some laudable pursuit my life must be insipid and wearisome; I therefore took the resolution of leaving London, and settled myself for the winter at Utrecht, where I recovered my inclination for study and rational thinking. I then laid my account with travelling for a couple of years, but I found my father's views to be entirely different. You saw the letter which I wrote him from this, and I flatter myself that you approved of it. I cannot expect his answer for some weeks; in the meantime he tells me that he would not oppose my passing another winter at Utrecht, so that he does not grudge the time which I ask. As for the money, I should think for one year a little extraordinary expense is not thrown away, when it is also to be considered that what I spend now I shall not have some years hence. My father seems much against my going to Italy, but gives me leave to go from there and pass some months in Paris. I own that the words of the Apostle Paul, "I must see Rome," are strongly

borne in upon my mind; it would give me infinite pleasure; it would give me *talk for a lifetime*, and I should go home to Auchinleck with serene contentment. I am no libertine, and have a moral certainty of suffering no harm in Italy; I can also assure you that I shall be as moderate as possible in my expenses. I do not intend to travel as *Mi Lord Anglois*, but merely as a scholar and a man of elegant curiosity, and I am told that in that character I may live in Italy very reasonably. I obviate your objection of my being obliged to live like others, by assuring you that I have none of that second-rate ambition which actuates most young men of fortune upon their travels. After passing four months on classic ground, I would come through France, and go home, as I said to my father, *uti conviva satur*.

Now, Sir, tell me fairly if I am unreasonable. Upon my honour, I cannot think that I am. I give you my word that my father's inclinations shall be as inviolable laws to his son; but don't you think that I may just remonstrate before I consider an act as passed? Don't you think that, rather than go home contrary to what I much desire, and cannot help thinking very proper, —don't you think it worth while to humour me so far as to allow me my year and a reasonable sum, after which I return clear and contented, without any pretence for my stormy disposition to murmur at? I would beg, Sir, that you may write to my father your opinion as to this matter, and put it in the light which you may think it deserves. In the meantime I can see little advantage to be had at Berlin. I shall however remain here a fortnight, after which I intend passing by Mannheim, and one or two more of the German Courts, to Geneva; I am then at the point from whence I may either steer to Italy or to France. I shall see

Voltaire; I shall also see Switzerland and Rousseau: these two men are to me greater objects than most statues or pictures.

I take this opportunity to assure the loved and respected friend of my father that I am sincerely happy at having obtained his acquaintance. I would hope that I shall not be found unworthy of his regard, and I wish very honestly for an opportunity of showing my real esteem for such a character as I could draw to anybody else but to himself.

I am, Sir, your obliged, humble servant,

J. B.

I would be much obliged to you for an answer as soon as you are at leisure to write.

The next letter relates to the affairs referred to already in the letters to Temple, and, although as ridiculous in expression as Boswell even could make it, is very creditable to his amiability; it shows too that he exerted himself to help the father of his friend in his adversity. Upon this letter Mr. Bisset truly remarks, that not only does he flatter his correspondent judiciously, but he compliments himself in no small degree, and "one fancies that one can see in these letters the germ of the future most lively biographer of Johnson." The editor of the Mitchell Papers rightly supposed it would not be interesting to his readers to see the names of Temple and his family in his collection, and he has therefore excluded them. The letter runs thus:

MR. BOSWELL TO MR. MITCHELL.

14] GENEVA, *December 26th*, 1764.

DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your letter from Spa, although it gave me no great encouragement in my scheme of going to Italy. You tell me gravely to follow the plan which my father prescribes, whatever it may be; and in doing so I shall certainly act most wisely. I forgive you this, for I say just the same to

young people when I advise. To enter into a detail of the little circumstances which compose the felicity of another, is what a man of any genius can hardly submit to. We therefore give a good, wholesome, general counsel; and he who consults us thinks a little, and then endeavours to take his own way as well as he can. I have however the happiness to inform you that my father has consented that I shall go to Italy. Upon my soul, I am grateful to the most worthy of men: it will be hard if we are not well together, for I love him with the strongest affection. If I find that I cannot succeed in my own plans, in such a way as to convince my father that I am in the right, I shall do my utmost to fulfil the plan beyond which he cannot think to look. You may suppose what my ideas are, for they are of your old acquaintances. One thing I am sure of, and, by the undisguised honour of a man of probity, I swear, shall chiefly influence me,—a regard to the happiness of him to whom I owe so much. Believe me, I have a *soul.*

The intention of this letter is to beg your interest in an affair which I have much at heart. My most intimate friend, the friend of my youth and the comfort of my being, is a Mr. Temple, of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He is an Englishman, and I am an old Scot; but brothers were never more united than we are. His father was formerly Mayor of Berwick. He had an employment in the Customs, but by misfortune became bankrupt a year or two ago. My friend had a small estate from his mother; he has generously contributed more than the half of it towards the relief of his father, and has got the creditors to be satisfied; but his father has nothing to live upon. He understands business very well. An employment of moderate income in the Customs, or in one of the public offices, would

make him happy. His youngest son was Lieutenant in the regiment of the late General ——, who was a friend of the family, and promised to take care of the young man. The regiment has been broken up some time. The Lieutenant is on half-pay, and must have a part of the little fortune which his brother still possesses. Surely it would be no very hard matter to get him put upon full pay.

Sir, I beg and entreat of you to give me your interest. You are the only man in Britain, except my Sovereign, whom I would ask a favour of. I know you to be a man of the most perfect honour; and I know not another who has been tried in public life. I have written to Lady Northumberland; but I confess I have little confidence in her; and, believe me, I have not been mean enough to flatter her. Pray tell me how much you can do. If you can aid me, you will most truly oblige a worthy fellow, *for such I am.* Were I as rich as I shall probably be, the father and brother of my friend should not be as they are.

Adieu, respected Sir,

BOSWELL.

I am very anxious as to this affair. Pray write to me "*Aux soins de*, etc. etc. *à Genève*, etc. etc."

Whether these curious letters were productive of the good effects Boswell desired, is unfortunately now undiscoverable. Boswell visited different parts of the Netherlands; proceeded thence to Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Corsica, returning by Paris. "I dare to call this a spirited tour; I dare to challenge your approbation," he exclaims to Dr. Johnson, in a letter which the writer modestly describes, twenty years afterwards, as "full of generous enthusiasm." *

In his passion for knowing and being known to celebrated persons, Boswell sought out, on his tour, both Voltaire and

* See "Life of Johnson," *anno* 1765.

Rousseau, and, to his intense delight, was received by both these famous men. The most important event of his travels, however, was his visit to Corsica, and the acquaintance he there made with Pascal Paoli. This latter event seems almost to have turned his head. However he was relieved to some extent after he had been delivered of his work upon Corsica, which comprised two portions,—his "History" and his "Journal." "Your History," writes Johnson to the happy author,* "is like other histories, but your Journal is in a very high degree curious and delightful. There is between the History and the Journal that difference which there will always be found between notions borrowed from without and notions generated from within. Your History was copied from books; your Journal rose out of your own experience and observation. You express images which operated strongly upon yourself, and you have impressed them with great force upon your readers. I know not whether I could name any narrative by which curiosity is better excited or better gratified."

It would seem that he had, previous to the publication or the book, favoured the Doctor a little too much with his talk about Corsica, and what he was going to write. He had, however, he says, been "encouraged" by Johnson's telling him, in reference to his intended publication, that, although he could not "go to the bottom of the subject," yet "all that you tell us will be new to us: give us as many anecdotes as you can." The History is indeed a dull and weak essay, and justifies the postscript which Dr. Johnson adds to a letter:† "As to your 'History of Corsica,' you have no materials which others have not or may not have. You have somehow or other warmed your imagination. I wish there were some cure, like the Lover's Leap, for all heads of which some single idea has obtained an unreasonable and irregular possession. Mind your own affairs, and leave the Corsicans to theirs." And at a later date,‡ after reproaching Boswell for publishing part of one of his letters without leave, he tells him to empty his "head of Corsica," which has filled it too long. To this sensible admonition the Doctor's correspondent replies,§ "How

* September 9, 1769.
† August 10, 1766.
‡ March 23, 1768.
§ April 26, 1768.

can you bid me 'empty my head of Corsica'? My noble-minded friend, do you not feel for an oppressed nation bravely struggling to be free. . . . Empty my head of Corsica! Empty it of honour, empty it of humanity, empty it of friendship, empty it of piety!" He might have added, empty it of vanity and supply it with sense, for his follies and vagaries upon this subject appear to have been excessive even for Boswell. In spite of his ludicrous Corsican extravagances—enough almost to have sunk his book beneath the ridicule of his acquaintance and the literary world—it is undoubted that his marvellous gift of giving interesting representations of others, while he exposed himself to contempt and ridicule, was displayed in his Journal. This part of the Work indeed excited considerable attention, and is even now very amusing. Walpole, in writing to Gray (February 18, 1768), thus speaks of it:

"Pray read the new account of Corsica; what relates to Paoli will amuse you much. There is a deal about the island and its divisions that one does not care a straw for. The author, Boswell, is a strange being, and, like Cambridge, has a rage for knowing anybody that ever was talked of. He forced himself upon me in spite of my teeth and my doors, and I see has given a foolish account of all he could pick up from me about King Theodore. He then took an antipathy to me on Rousseau's account, abused me in the newspapers, and expected Rousseau to do so too; but as he came to see me no more, I forgave all the rest. I see he now is a little sick of Rousseau himself, but I hope it will not cure him of his anger to me; however his book will amuse you."

To this Gray, in his reply of February 25, 1768, says: "Mr. Boswell's book I was going to recommend to you when I received your letter. It has pleased and moved me strangely; all (I mean) that relates to Paoli. The pamphlet proves what I have always maintained, that any fool may write a most valuable book by chance, if he will only tell us what he heard and said with veracity. Of Mr. Boswell's truth I have not the least suspicion, because I am sure he could invent nothing of the kind. The title of this part of his work is a Dialogue between a Green Goose and a Hero." The "veracity" of the Journal indeed is vouched for not only by Boswell himself, who declares that he wrote the most literal account of what he saw and did, but also by the same characteristic traits which

have given his "Life of Johnson" its fame. Some of his conversations with Paoli, which, of course, had still more interest at the time when the Corsican patriot was in every man's mind, have the true Boswellian virtue. The personal adventures of the tourist only increase our astonishment, notwithstanding Gray's opinion of its easy accomplishment, that such a "fool" could appreciate and reproduce the Dialogues, or ever had the opportunity afforded him of doing so by Paoli and his friends.* "Before I was accustomed to Corsica," says he, "I sometimes forgot myself, and, imagining I was in a public-house, called for what I wanted with the tone which one uses in calling to a waiter at a tavern. I did so at Pino, asking for a variety of things at once, when Signora Tomasi, perceiving my mistake, smiled, saying, with much calmness and good nature, 'One thing after another, Sir.'" He mentions also a curious circumstance with respect to himself, that, after talking with the General some time, "my timidity wore off; I no longer thought of myself."† He has recorded the like effect when conversing with Dr. Johnson, and there is no reason to doubt either statement. Again he tells us, "Every day I felt myself happier. I had my chocolate served upon a silver salver adorned with the arms of Corsica." He seems not unfrequently to have confided to Paoli portions of autobiography, especially with regard to a topic with which we know he indulged Dr. Johnson, viz. on hypochondria, a complaint, it would appear, he was rather proud of. He thus makes his confession on one occasion: "With a mind naturally inclined to melancholy and a keen desire of inquiry, I had intensely applied myself to metaphysical research, and reasoned beyond my depth. . . . I told him I had almost become for ever incapable of taking a part in active life." Probably his "timidity had quite worn off" at the time of this interesting acknowledgment; and assuredly his melancholy did not possess him when, on a convivial occasion with some of his Corsican friends, he amused them and himself in noble song: "I sang 'Hearts of Oak are our ships,' etc. I fancied myself to be a recruiting sea-officer; I fancied all my chorus of Corsicans aboard the British fleet."‡ One more

* "Journal" (second edit.), p. 277. † *Ibid.*, p. 295.
‡ "Journal," p. 321.

passage from the "Tour" must not be omitted: "One day when I rode out I was mounted on Paoli's own horse, with rich furniture of crimson velvet with broad gold lace, and had my guards marching along with me, I allowed myself to indulge in a momentary pride in this parade, as I was curious to experience what would really be the pleasure of state and distinction with which all mankind are so strangely intoxicated. . . . I became a great favourite among the peasants and soldiers. I got a Corsican dress made, in which I walked about with an air of true satisfaction." The dress here referred to was probably the one in which he afterwards occasionally paraded on his return to England.

An example of the stilted style of writing adopted by Mr. Boswell at times, may be seen in the Dedication to his "Account of Corsica." It may be noticed, that in the preface to the work he desires that his orthography should be faithfully preserved in all the future reprints which he believed the world might require. He had especially at heart the final *k* in words like *publick*, *panegyrick*; accordingly this request has here been piously complied with. The Dedication is as follows:

"DEDICATION
TO
PASCAL PAOLI,
GENERAL OF
THE CORSICANS.

"SIR,—Dedications are for most part the offerings of interested servility, or the effusions of partial zeal; enumerating the virtues of men in whom no virtues can be found, or predicting greatness to those who afterwards pass their days in unambitious indolence, and die leaving no memorial of their existence but a dedication, in which all their merit is confessedly future, and which time has turned into a silent reproach.

"He who has any experience of mankind will be cautious to whom he dedicates. Publickly to bestow praise on merit of which the publick is not sensible, or

to raise flattering expectations which are never fulfilled, must sink the character of an author, and make him appear a cringing parasite, or a fond enthusiast.

"I am under no apprehensions of that nature, when I inscribe this book to Pascal Paoli. Your virtues, Sir, are universally acknowledged; they dignify the pages which I venture to present to you; and it is my singular felicity that my book is the voucher of its Dedication.

"In thus addressing you, my intention is not to attempt your panegyrick. That may in some measure be collected from my imperfect labours. But I wish to express to the world, the admiration and gratitude with which you have inspired me.

"This, Sir, is all the return that I can make for the many favours you have deigned to confer upon me. I entreat you to receive it as a testimony of my disposition. I regret that I have neither power nor interest to enable me to render any essential service to you and the brave Corsicans. I can only assure you of the most fervent wishes of a private gentleman. I have the honour to be, with all respect and affection,

"Sir,

"Your ever devoted,

"Obliged, humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

"AUCHINLECK, AYRSHIRE,
"29 *October*, 1767."

Boswell's acquaintance with Paoli was not only the cause of the book being written, but enabled the enthusiastic Scotchman to visit and enter into correspondence with various great men: amongst others, he thus honoured Mr. Pitt. Arrayed in the Corsican costume, he forced his way to Mr. Pitt, and we find in the Pitt correspondence the following letter:*

* Chatham Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 388.

15] St. James's Street, *Feb.* 19, 1766.

Sir,—I have the honour to receive your most obliging letter, and can with difficulty restrain myself from paying you compliments on the very genteel manner in which you are pleased to treat me. But I come from a people* among whom even the lowest arts of insinuation are unknown. However you may by political circumstances be in one view a simple individual, yet Sir, Mr. Pitt will always be the Prime Minister of the brave, the secretary of freedom and of spirit; and I hope that I may with propriety talk to him of the views of the illustrious Paoli. Be that as it may, I shall very much value the honour of being admitted to your acquaintance.

I am, with the highest esteem,
Your most obedient servant,
James Boswell.

Boswell's father was by no means pleased with the result of his son's travelling, nor did he sympathise with his tastes or conduct any more after than before the Utrecht studies and the European tour. Neither Paoli nor Johnson excited his veneration in the slightest degree. He asserted, according to the well-known anecdote, that "There's nae hope for Jamie, mon; Jamie is gaen clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He's done with Paoli, he's off wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican; and whose tail do you think he has pinned himself to now, mon? A dominie, mon, an auld dominie; he keepit a schule and cau'd it an acaudemy." The old gentleman, however, lived to modify this opinion, as will be seen later in the volume.

Boswell returned to London in February, 1766, and was

* Boswell should have remembered, before he used this phrase, Dr. Johnson's sneer on their first introduction. Mr. Pitt is here left in doubt, by the language employed, whether Boswell is describing Corsica or Scotland.

able to enjoy the society of his friend Temple again. He records that during his stay there he presented his "old and most intimate friend the Rev. Mr. Temple, then of Cambridge," to Dr. Johnson. This occurred at the "Mitre," and Mr. Temple was indulged, as it would seem, with a very fair specimen of the rough way in which poor Boswell and his opinions were occasionally treated by the Doctor. The succeeding year the correspondence with Mr. Temple was resumed. The letters which here follow contain matter which does not put the writer of them in a very becoming attitude; but the points referred to in them are closely connected with subjects which Boswell much delighted to discuss with the Doctor and other eminent men, and which occupy considerable space in the "Life of Johnson." It is, therefore, desirable to know what Boswell's private views and practices really were; for truthful as for the most part his representations of what was sent and meant may be, yet some prejudices and colouring, drawn from his own character, were not unfrequently imparted to his writings.* If any further apology is required for presenting such extraordinary letters to the reader, he must be referred to the introduction to this volume; and if it is still thought by some that it were better not to have printed these evidences of Boswell's folly, all that can be said in reply is, that although this may be so, it is a matter of opinion which every one must form for himself.

16] EDINBURGH, *1st February*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—When I see lying before me your last letter, dated the 2nd of December, and consider how long a time has passed without any communication between us, I am filled with wonder and regret; but I think both of us are so far arrived in the knowledge of human nature that we can calmly contemplate the vicissitudes of our own minds, and, without fretting at our imperfections, can be sorry for

* This has been well shown in respect to Goldsmith by Mr. Forster, in his "Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith."

them, while we are supported and cheered by the consciousness of our good qualities.

I am sincerely happy that you are at length the Reverend Mr. Temple. I view the profession of a clergyman in an amiable and respectable light. Don't be moved by declamations against ecclesiastical history, as if that could blacken the sacred Order. I confess that it is not in ecclesiastical history that we find the most agreeable account of divines; their politics, their ambition, and their cruelty are there displayed; but remember, Temple, you are there reading the vices of only political divines,—of such individuals as in so numerous a body have been very unworthy members of the Church, and should have rather been employed in the rudest secular concerns. But if you would judge fairly of the priests of Jesus, you must consider how many of the distressed they have comforted, how many of the wicked they have reclaimed, how many of the good they have improved; consider the lives of thousands of worthy, pious divines who have been a blessing to their parishes. This is just, Temple. You say the truths of morality are written in the hearts of all men, and they find it their interest to practise them. My dear friend, will you believe a specious moral essayist against your own experience? Don't you in the very same letter complain of the wickedness of those around you? Don't you talk of the tares in society? My friend, it is your office to labour cheerfully in the vineyard, and, if possible, to leave not a tare in Mamhead.* You are tempted to join Rousseau in preferring the savage state: I am so too, at times. When jaded with business, or when tormented with the passions of civilised life, I could fly to the woods,

* In Devonshire, of which place Mr. Temple was perpetual curate.

nay I could * on the face of a mountain, were it possible for me to be conscious of it and to brave the elements by glorious insensibility. But these are the sallies of desperation. Philosophy teacheth us to be moderate, to be patient, to expect a gradual progress of refinement and felicity; in that hope I look up to the Lord of the Universe, with a grateful remembrance of the grand and mysterious propitiation which Christianity hath announced.

Thus far I got in my letter before breakfast; it is now late in the evening when I sit down again, but I sit down in the same frame in which I parted from you in the morning. In a word, my dear Temple, be a good clergyman, and you will be happy both here and hereafter.

I can well imagine your solitary state at the Rectory when all your neighbours are gone to town, and in such a winter too. I hope you read Thomson, and make the clouds and storms

> "Exalt the soul to solemn thought
> And heavenly musing."

You may however look forward to the delights of matrimony. Such an institution becomes a pious clergyman: I cannot think of it while my father lives; his notions and mine are so different, that the wife whom I would choose would in all probability be very disagreeable to him. If he does not marry again, there is a duty upon me to live with him and be careful of him. His character is such that he must have his son in a great degree of subjection to him. Were I to marry, he could not alter his ideas, so I should be

* Here two words become undecipherable in the MS., and *what* it is that Mr. Boswell felt he could do "on the face of a mountain" must unfortunately be left in entire obscurity.

in a most awkward state between the subjection of a son and the authority of a father, which as a father and as the master I ought to possess. Perhaps it would be better for a man in my situation to keep himself free. A bachelor has an easy unconcerned behaviour, which is more taking with the generality of the world than the behaviour of a married man possibly can be, if he acts in character. The bachelor has a carelessness of disposition which pleases everybody, and everybody thinks him a sort of a common good, *nunc mihi, nunc aliis benignus*,—a feather which flies about and lights now here, now there; and accordingly the connections of a bachelor are always most extensive, whereas a married man has a settled plan, a certain degree of care, and has his affections collected by one great attachment, and therefore he cannot be such good company to everybody he meets; but in my opinion, after a certain time of life a man is not so desirous of this general flutter, the mind becomes more composed, and requires some settled satisfaction on which it can repose.

I am sensible that everything depends on the light in which we view it, and nothing more so than marriage. If you think of that weariness which must at times hang over every kind of society, those disgusts and vexations which will happen in the intercourse of life, you will be frightened to take upon you the serious charge of the father of a family; but if you think of the comforts of a home, where you are a sort of sovereign, the kind endearments of an amiable woman, who has no wish but to make you happy, the amusement of seeing your children grow up from infancy to manhood, and the pleasing pride of being the father of brave and learned men, all which may be the case, and depends much on our conduct as fathers, then mar-

riage is truly the condition in which true felicity is to be found. I think we may strike a good medium. Let us keep in mind the *nil admirari*, and not expect too much. It was from having too high expectations of enjoyment that I suffered so much, for the natural gloom of my mind was not sufficient to torment me in a degree so acute. In the meantime, my friend, I am happy enough to have a *dear infidel*, as you say; but don't think her unfaithful, I could not love her if she was. There is a baseness in all deceit which my soul is virtuous enough to abhor, and therefore I look with horror on adultery. But my amiable mistress is no longer bound to him who was her husband: he has used her shockingly ill; he has deserted her, he lives with another. Is she not then free? She is, it is clear, and no arguments can disguise it. She is now mine, and were she to be unfaithful to me she ought to be pierced with a Corsican poniard; but I believe she loves me sincerely. She has done everything to please me: she is perfectly generous, and would not hear of any present.

I am now advancing fast in the law. I am coming into great employment; I have this winter made sixty-five guineas, which is a considerable sum for a young man. I expect that this year I shall clear above a hundred pieces.

28*th February*.—In this manner I have travelled on through seven folio pages. Every day I have intended to close my letter, and every night I have felt real pain of mind to think that I had not done it. Your kind favour of the 19th current is just arrived; it rouses me, and now I am resolved to give no longer quarter to my indolence. I am at present leading the strangest life. You know one half of the business before the Court of Session is carried on by writing. In the first

instance, a case is pleaded before the Lord Ordinary, that is to say, one of the fifteen Judges, who sits in his turn for a week in the Outer House; but no sooner does he give judgment than we give him in representations and answers, and replys and duplys and tryplys; and he will sometimes order memorials, to give him a full view of the case. Then we reclaim to the Inner House by petition; and then we give in a variety of printed papers, from which the Lords determine the cause; for it is only in causes of great consequence that the Court orders a hearing in presence. This method of proceeding is admirable, for it gives the Judges a complete state of every question; and by binding up the Session papers a man may lay up a treasure of law reasoning and a collection of extraordinary facts.

4th March.—Here I am still, and let me go on. It must be confessed that our Court of Session is not so favourable to eloquence as the English courts; yet the Outer House here is a school where a man may train himself to pretty good purpose. I am surprised at myself, I already speak with so much ease and boldness, and have already the language of the bar so much at command. I have now cleared eighty guineas. My clerk comes to me every morning at six, and I have dictated to him forty folio pages in one day. It is impossible to give you an idea of my present life. I send you one of my law papers, and a copy of my thesis. I am doing nobly; but I have not leisure for learning. I can hardly ever answer the letters of my friends; but henceforth, Temple, I will write to you every two weeks: trust me. It is very odd that I can labour so hard at law, when I am so indolent in other things. Let you and I keep up a frequent intercourse, and preserve our friendship in its full

force and elegance, and assist each other to dispel every cloud.

You are right in preferring social life to retirement, for no philosophy is equal to action; you should not, however, have quitted your elbow-chairs and fine carpets; they are amusements, and you must not be without them. You have had a fit of low spirits.

In a former part of this letter I have talked a great deal of my sweet little mistress; I am, however, uneasy about her. Furnishing a house and maintaining her with a maid will cost me a great deal of money, and it is too like marriage, or too much a settled plan of licentiousness; but what can I do? I have already taken the house, and the lady has agreed to go in at Whitsuntide; I cannot in honour draw back.

Oh, my friend! were you but here; but, alas, that cannot be. Mamhead is not within a call; it ought to be, for you should always be my pastor, and I might now and then be yours. Friend of my youth, explain to me how we suffer so severely from what no longer exists. How am I tormented because my charmer has formerly loved others! Besides, she is ill-bred, quite a rompish girl. She debases my dignity; she has no refinement, but she is very handsome and very lively. What is it to me that she has formerly loved? so have I. I am positive that since I first courted her at Moffat she has been constant to me; she is kind, she is generous. What shall I do? I wish I could get off; and yet how awkward would it be! Think of your Berwick Celia, and sympathise with me. One way or other, my mind will be settled before I can hear from you. This is a curious epistle to a clergyman. Admonish me, but forgive me.

Dr. Robertson will soon give the world his "Charles the Fifth." Smith, I suppose, is in London; but I do

not hear that his book on jurisprudence is in any forwardness. David Hume, you know, is gone back to be a Minister of State, being appointed secretary to Mr. Conway. I fancy he will hardly write any more. I was very hearty with him here this winter. Whenever you go to London, I will give you a letter of introduction to him. His quarrel with Rousseau is a literary tragi-comedy. I wrote verses in the character of each of them; I also designed a ludicrous print. They have altered my idea, and made a clyster be applied to David; but you may have the substance of it from one of the London printshops, under the title of "The Savage." Now you must know Rousseau quarrelled with me too, and wrote me last summer a peevish letter, with strong marks of frenzy in it, for he has never yet told me the cause of his offence. As you will observe, how different is our friendship!

I have got pretty well acquainted with Dr. Gregory;* he was very desirous to know me. His book is ingenious and elegant, and he himself is one of the most amiable, pleasant men alive.

The Session will be up this day se'nnight. I shall then set myself down to my account of Corsica, and finish it in the vacation; I have got more materials for it. I had some time ago a letter of sixteen pages from General Paoli; and lately a letter of three pages from my Lord Chatham. David Hume told me sincerely he imagined my account of Corsica would be a book that will stand, and he is obliging enough to transact the publication of it for me with Andrew Millar. All your old friends here are well, *in statu quo*, Jeel and all, and remember you kindly. Sinclair has never found his brother. I don't write often enough to

* Dr. Gregory was Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

Squire Boswell, but I shall give him a good letter to-morrow; his beauty, I am afraid, would be too fine for this northern air.

Temple, will you allow me to marry a good Scots lass? ha! ha! ha! What shall I tell you? Zelide has been in London this winter. I never hear from her,—she is a strange creature. Sir John Pringle attended her as a physician. He wrote to my father: "She has too much vivacity; she talks of your son without either resentment or attachment." Her brothers and I correspond; but I am well rid of her. You say well, that I find mistresses wherever I am; but I am a sad dupe,—a perfect Don Quixote. To return to where it winces: might I not tell my charmer that really I am an inconstant being, but I cannot help it? or may I let my love gradually decay? Had she never loved before, I would have lost every drop of my blood rather than give her up. There's madness! there's delicacy! I have not had such a relief as this for I don't know how long. I have broke the trammels of business, and am roving unconfined with my Temple.

My brother Davy is a prodigious fine fellow. He and I dined together *tête-à-tête* on Christmas-day in an elegant manner, and went to chapel, as you and I did long ago. He is in constant occupation as a banker, and thinks those weak men whose minds waver. He is doing as well as I could wish. He is to settle in London. I hope you will make him your banker. On Christmas-day he and I drank, in great form, "the Reverend Mr. William Temple, rector of Mamhead, Devonshire."

What is to be thought of this life, my friend? Hear the story of my last three days. After tormenting myself with reflecting on my charmer's former loves, and ruminating on parting with her, I went to her.

I could not conceal my being distressed. I told her I was very unhappy, but I would not tell her why. She took this very seriously, and was so much affected that she went next morning and gave up her house. I went in the afternoon and secured the house, and then drank tea with her. She was much agitated; she said she was determined to go and board herself in the north of England, and that I used her very ill. I expostulated with her; I was sometimes resolved to let her go, and sometimes my heart was like to burst within me. I held her dear hand; her eyes were full of passion; I took her in my arms; I told her what made me miserable; she was pleased to find it was nothing worse. She had imagined that I was suspicious of her fidelity, and she thought that very ungenerous in reconsidering her behaviour. She said I should not mind her faults before I knew her, since her conduct was now most circumspect. We renewed our fondness. She owned she loved me more than she had ever done her husband. All was again well. She said she did not reproach me with my former follies, and we should be on an equal footing. My mind all at once felt a spring; I embraced her with transport. [The letter then proceeds to say that the same evening he supped with some friends, became intoxicated, and committed gross follies, which the next day he went and confessed to his charmer in terms which he thinks eloquent.]

How like you the eloquence of a young barrister? It was truly the eloquence of love. She bid me rise, she took me by the hand; she said she forgave me; she kissed me; she gently upbraided me for entertaining any unfavourable idea of her; she bid me take great care of myself, and in time coming never drink upon any account. Own to me, Temple, that this was

noble; and all the time her beauty enchanted me more than ever: may I not then be hers? In the meantime I must be shut up, and honest Thomas must be my guardian: he does excellently well. Pray what do you hear of Nicholls and Claxton? Make my compliments to them. There is a pretty book just now published, "An Essay on the History of Civil Society," by the Moral Philosophy Professor here. Let me hear from you soon, and believe me,

Ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

The topic of Boswell's escapade with Zelide, and other matrimonial speculations, are pursued in the following letter, and after an extremely original fashion:

17] AUCHINLECK, 30*th March*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I have this moment received your kind letter of the 20th instant, which has been like an oration of Tully to my soul. I am happy that I can make you a good report; for as my Circe went to Moffat just after I wrote to you last, and I myself was to go to Auchinleck, I had time to think coolly, and to call up that reason which I have so often contradicted.

Johnston, an old friend of mine, a writer in Edinburgh, but too much of an indolent philosopher to have great business, being rather a worthy country gentleman, with a paternal estate of £100 a year, was much distressed with my unhappy passion. He was at Moffat when it first began, and he marked the advance of the fever. It was he who assured me, upon his honour, that my fair one had a very bad character, and gave me some instances which made my love-sick heart recoil. He had some influence with me, but

my brother David had more. To him I discovered my weakness, my slavery, and begged his advice. He gave it me like a man : I gloried in him. I roused all my spirit, and at last I was myself again. I immediately wrote her a letter, of which I enclose the scroll for your perusal. She and I have always corresponded in such a manner that no mischief could come of it : for we supposed a Miss ——, to whom all my amorous vows were paid. You will observe my method. I wish you may be able to read the scroll. After reading the note to Mrs. ——, read pages 2, 3, and 4, to Miss ——; then read what is below the second score in page 1 ; and, lastly, read what is between the scores in page 1. This is leading you an odd dance, but it is better than giving myself the trouble of copying the letter, which I think you ought to see, and which you will please return to me. I have not yet got her answer : what will it be, think you ? I shall judge of her character from it. I shall see if she is abandoned or virtuous,—I mean both in a degree ; I shall at any rate be firm. What a snare have I escaped ! Do you remember Ulysses and Circe ?—

" Sub domina meretrice vixisset* turpis et excors."

My life is one of the most romantic that I believe either you or I really know of ; and yet I am a very sensible, good sort of man. What is the meaning of this, Temple ? You may depend upon it that very soon my follies will be at an end, and I shall turn out an admirable member of society. Now that I have given my mind the turn, I am totally emancipated from my charmer, as much as from the gardener's daughter who now puts on my fire and performs menial offices like any other wench ; and yet just this

* [*Sic* in 1857 edition ; sc. *fuisset*, Hor. Ep. I. ii. 25.]

time twelvemonth I was so madly in love as to think of marrying her. Should not this be an everlasting lesson to me. It shall be so, and Mrs. —— shall second it. By the bye, Temple, I must tell you that I have never owned Mrs. ——'s real kindness to me except in my letters to you. I am much upon honour in all these affairs; so if by any strange accident anybody who knows her should inquire of you, laugh it off as a frolic. You unrelenting dog! you have used my charmer cruelly. You say she is the unnatural mother of three children. Ah no! she loves her children, but a barbarous father keeps them from her. Her affection for her children makes her amiable to me; but I confess she ought, for the sake of her children, to conform to the strict ideas of the world. How strangely do we colour our own vices! I startle when you talk of keeping another man's wife. Yet that was literally my scheme, though imagination represented it just as being fond of a pretty, lively, black little lady, who, to oblige me, stayed in Edinburgh, and I very genteelly paid her expenses. You will see by my letter to her that I shall have a house and a servant-maid upon my hands. How she will settle that I know not. What say you to my marrying? I intend, next autumn, to visit Miss Bosville in Yorkshire; but I fear, my lot being cast in Scotland, that beauty would not be content. She is however grave; I shall see. There is a young lady in the neighbourhood here who has an estate of her own, between two and three hundred a year, just eighteen, a genteel person, an agreeable face, of a good family, sensible, good-tempered, cheerful, pious. You know my grand object is the ancient family of Auchinleck, —a venerable and noble principle. How would it do to conclude an alliance with the neighbouring princess,

and add her lands to our dominions? I should at once have a very pretty little estate, a good house, and a sweet place. My father is very fond of her; it would make him perfectly happy: he gives me hints in this way:—"I wish you had her—no bad scheme this; I think, a very good one." But I will not be in a hurry; there is plenty of time. I will take to myself the advice I wrote to you from Naples, and go to London awhile before I marry. I am not yet quite well, but am in as good a way as can be expected. My fair neighbour was a ward of my father's; she sits in our seat at church in Edinburgh; she would take possession here most naturally. This is a superb place; we have the noblest natural beauties, and my father has made most extensive improvements. We look ten miles out upon our own dominions; we have an excellent new house. I am now writing in a library forty feet long. Come to us, my dearest friend; we will live like the most privileged spirits of antiquity.

I am now seriously engaged in my account of Corsica; it elevates my soul, and makes me *spernere humum;* I shall have it finished by June. My brother David is quite to my mind. I enclose you a letter from him; you will see the young man as he is in it. He has a portion of that sensibility which renders you and me unhappy every moment, till time and experience taught us common sense and moderate desires.

I am ever, my dearest friend,
Most affectionately yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—What *varios casus* have you known your friend in first and last, real and imaginary! only recollect. How do you get your letters when my

Lord Lisburne is at London? Must this go to his Lordship's town-house? Return me David's letter, with the scroll, to Mrs. ——.

In the interval between the date of the last letter and that of 12th June, Boswell addressed a letter to the Earl of Chatham, which ought not to be omitted, as it exhibits the self-complacency of the writer in a curious manner. The modesty with which he asks the Earl of Chatham to write to him "now and then," that he may delight in being a correspondent of a great man, is truly astounding: Boswell, however, was gratified to some extent, for the next letter to Temple mentions a letter of three pages from Lord Chatham.

18] AUCHINLECK, *April 8th*, 1767.

I have communicated to General Paoli the contents of your Lordship's letter, and I am persuaded he will think as I do. . . . Your Lordship applauds my "generous warmth for so striking a character as the able chief." Indeed, my Lord, I have the happiness of being capable to contemplate, with supreme delight, those distinguished spirits by which God is sometimes pleased to honour humanity; and, as I have no personal favour to ask of your Lordship, I will tell you, with the confidence of one who does not fear to be thought a flatterer, that your character, my Lord, has filled many of my best hours with that noble admiration which a disinterested soul can enjoy in the bower of philosophy. [He then informs his correspondent that he is about to publish an account of Corsica, and how he will write it, and then proceeds:—] As for myself, to please a worthy and respected father, one of our Scots Judges, I studied law, and am now fairly entered to the bar. I begin to like it; I can labour hard; I feel myself coming forward; and I hope to be

useful to my country. *Could your Lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter?* I have been told how favourably your Lordship has spoken of me. To correspond with a Paoli and with a Chatham is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of virtuous fame.

I am, etc.,
JAMES BOSWELL.

Alas! the following letter to Temple discloses that the pursuit of "virtuous fame" was not altogether preserved ardent in the writer's mind by the means of the exalted correspondence or otherwise.

19] EDINBURGH, *12th June*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I have this moment received your letter of yesterday. All your letters have come safe. I may at times be a man of flight, but I am equalled if not exceeded by my friend. Now, at Mamhead, all passion for a pretty maid, yet profound, daring, and philosophical; then to London, and desiring me not to write till I should hear from you; and now, to my astonishment, at Berwick-upon-Tweed. Never, surely, were two men of minds more similar. I am not surprised with what you tell me of your present views. Perhaps the plan you are now thinking of may be the surest for your happiness. The lady undoubtedly has merit; she has a genteel fortune, and her constancy shows that she has a real regard for you: but of this we shall talk at great length. The lady in my neighbourhood is the finest woman I have ever seen. I went and visited her, and she was so good as to prevail with her mother to come to Auchinleck, where they stayed four days, and in our romantic groves I adored her like a divinity. I have already given you her character.

My father is very desirous that I should marry her,—all my relations, all my neighbours, approve of it. She looked quite at home in the house of Auchinleck. Her picture would be an ornament to the gallery. Her children would be all Boswells and Temples, and as fine women as these are excellent men. And now, my friend, my best adviser comes to hear me talk of her and to fix my wavering mind. I must tell you my Italian angel is constant; I had a letter from her but a few days ago, which made me cry. Come to me, my Temple; and on that Arthur Seat, where our youthful fancies roved abroad into extravagant, imaginary futurity, shall we now consult together on plans of real life and solid happiness. We can now hear from each other every two days. How glad I am at this unexpected meeting! what a variety have we to talk about! I was at any rate to have insisted on your coming down to see my princess. Perhaps it would be well for me to be as much engaged as you are; it would fix my mind at once in women, as the law has in employment.

Ever yours,

J. B.

The "Douglas Cause," mentioned in the following letter, is often alluded to by Boswell as one in which he was interested, and in which he also interfered with his pen, by writing his "Essence of the Douglas Cause." It possessed that character which naturally would attract his officious attention; for it was the subject of everybody's conversation; and it gratified Boswell's feeling of self-importance to be (or to be supposed to be) mixed up in a matter which was producing an excitement almost, if not altogether, unparalleled in the history of British litigation. Perhaps this excitement was all the greater on account of the grossness of the scandals the trial revealed, and the indecency divulged in its detail.

The question in dispute was as to the heirship of Mr. Archibald Douglas. If he were really the son of Lady Jane Douglas, he would inherit large family estates; but if he were supposititious, then they would descend to the Duke of Hamilton. On behalf of the latter it was attempted to be established that Mr. Douglas and his twin brother (who had died young) had been bought of a glass manufacturer and a rope dancer in France; and great stress was laid upon the improbability that a female, who had been long married to her first husband without issue, should, in her forty-ninth year, when married a second time to an aged and infirm old gentleman, give birth to twins.

The trial had commenced in Scotland, where the excitement was excessive; indeed party spirit ran so high that the peace of Edinburgh was for two days broken thereby, the Hamilton party being on one occasion driven forth from the city, and their family apartments in Holyrood House broken into and plundered. The Judges of the Court of Session, when the Cause was before them, had been divided in opinion, eight against seven, the Lord-President Dundas giving the casting vote in favour of the Duke of Hamilton; and in consequence of it, he and several other of the Judges had, on the reversal by the Lords, their houses attacked by a mob. It is said, but not upon conclusive authority, that Boswell himself headed the mob, which broke his own father's windows.

On the appeal to the House of Lords there was most injudicial feeling exhibited. The lay Lords determined to take part in the decision of the appeal, and there was much canvassing, and doubt as to the result. When the debate came on, the Duke of Newcastle opened it on behalf of one side, and Lord Sandwich, taking the opposite view of the question, answered him. According to Horace Walpole* the latter nobleman spoke at great length "with much humour, and scandalised the bishops, having with his usual industry studied even the midwifery of the case, which he retailed with very little decency." Lord Camden, then Chancellor, took occasion to affirm that in his opinion the Appeal before the house was "perhaps the most solemn and important ever heard at the bar;" his Lordship however not only thought it very important, but he thought it very clear, alleging that "a more ample and positive proof of

* "Memoir of George III.," vol. iii. p. 303.

the child's being the son of a mother never appeared in a court of justice."

The proceedings in the Cause, with the evidence, may be studied in five large quarto volumes; but the chief interest in the case probably remains nowadays with those who inherit the disputed property, and in a less degree perhaps with those who might have done so if the House of Lords had given an opposite judgment.

Lord Campbell gives his opinion however thus on the matter. He says: "I believe, the general opinion of English lawyers was in favour of the decision of the Court of Session in Scotland; but this was produced a good deal by Lord Mansfield's wretched arguments [as to the impossibility of an illustrious lady committing such a fraud], and the very able letters of Andrew Stuart, the Duke of Hamilton's agent, whose conduct had been severely reflected upon. I once studied the case very attentively, and I must own that I came to the conclusion that the House did well in reversing."*

Walpole's judgment, on the other hand, is hostile to the Douglas Claim: he says,—"At ten o'clock at night the decree was reversed without a division; a sentence, I think, conformable to equity, as the child was owned by both parents, and the imposture not absolutely proved; yet, in my opinion, not awarded in favour of truth,† a declaration I should not be so arrogant as to make, if many able men were not as much persuaded as I am of the child being supposititious."‡ It should be observed that although the lay Peers took part in the debate, and entered into the legal question, they did not divide the House eventually; nevertheless five of them, headed by the Duke of Bedford, thought it not improper to sign a protest against the decision.

For whichever side the judgment of the Court ought legally to have been, it is quite clear that the case, in its various stages, presents the spectacle of persons of high birth and great wealth mixed up with most disreputable transactions in pursuit of property. On both sides fraud and perjury were unscrupulously

* Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," vol. v. p. 290.
† This is no compliment paid to equity.
‡ Chap. x. vol. ii.

called in aid of the respective claims of the noble houses. The services of skilful scoundrels were purchased; and indeed no means which could be devised by the agents employed to prepare and destroy evidence, according as it suited their clients' purposes, were rejected.

The Douglas Cause seems to afford an example of all the worst characteristics of litigation: it exhibits prejudice in judges,* venality in lawyers, unscrupulousness among the suitors and their creatures, and uncertainty in the administration of the law itself. These circumstances, however, as has been already observed, rendered Boswell's interest in the matter all the livelier.

The Cause is sometimes cited in the medico-legal books as an authority with regard to the value of evidence relating to family likeness,† when adduced to prove descent, as well as containing a great deal of curious information upon the probable limits of the parents' ages within which an heir or heiress may interpose between an estate and its expectant inheritor to disappoint him.

In addition to the judicial debates, the Parliamentary struggle, the bitter conflicts of pamphleteers, and the violence of the mobs, the services of fiction were called into request; and "Dorando," a Spanish tale, probably written by Boswell, was published, which purported to embody the story involved in the suit.

Although Boswell sometimes seems to represent himself as

* The speeches of Lord Camden and Lord Mansfield (miserably reported) are to be found in the "Collectanea Juridica" (vol. ii. p. 387), and in Parl. Hist., vol. xvi. Andrew Stuart's "Letters to Lord Mansfield" show too the bitter character of the dispute, and the extreme length to which it was carried. The reader may also consult the "Annual Reporter" for 1769 for a brief account of the matter.

† The evidence in the Douglas Cause on this head was very conflicting, some witnesses declaring Archibald Douglas to be the very image of his supposed father, while others swore he exactly resembled *a French peasant*. It was anyhow less clear than another reported case, where the Quarter Sessions affiliated a child who had six fingers to his hand upon an unfortunate man because he had a like number upon one of his hands.

counsel in the Cause, he was not properly retained; thus we find, in a letter to Dr. Johnson (Feb. 26, 1778), Boswell says: "I purpose being in London about the 28th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the House as one of Douglas's counsel in the great last competition between Duke Hamilton and him."

This would indicate that he *appeared*, at all events at this stage of the litigation, as counsel, but was in truth only a friend and amateur, and not a duly appointed advocate. In the following letter he states directly that he was not counsel in the Cause.

Whatever was the part Boswell really played in the suit, it is clear he was delighted with the importance it gave him, even (when it produced the exhibition of contempt and animosity from the party whose cause he had not espoused. He gives an instance of this in recounting the meeting with the Duchess of Hamilton. The scene is one of those which probably Mr. Macaulay had in his mind when he says that the bare recollection of having made themselves so ridiculous and contemptible as Boswell certainly here did, would be enough to induce most men to hang themselves from shame and vexation. "I was in fine spirits," says Boswell, "and though sensible that I had the misfortune of not being in favour with the Duchess, I was not the least disconcerted, and offered her Grace some of the dish before me. It must be owned that I was in the right to be quite unconcerned, if I could. I was the Duke of Argyle's guest; and I had no reason to suppose that he had adopted the prejudices and resentments of the Duchess of Hamilton.

"I knew it was the rule of modern high life not to drink to anybody; but, that I might have the satisfaction for once to look the Duchess in the face, with a glass in my hand, I with a respectful air addressed her, 'My Lady Duchess, I have the honour to drink to your Grace's good health.' I repeated the words audibly, and with a steady countenance. This was perhaps rather too much; but some allowance must be made for human feelings. . . . I made some remark that seemed to imply a belief in *second sight*. The Duchess said, 'I fancy you will be a *Methodist*.' This was the only sentence her Grace deigned to utter to me; and I took it for granted she thought it a good hit on my *credulity* in the Douglas Cause. . . .

We went to tea. The Duke and I walked up and down the drawing-room conversing. The Duchess still continued to show the same marked coldness for me, for which, though I suffered from it, I made every allowance, considering the very warm part that I had taken for Douglas in the cause in which she thought her son deeply interested. Had not her Grace discovered some displeasure towards me, I should have suspected her of insensibility or dissimulation.

"Her Grace made Dr. Johnson come and sit by her, and asked him why he made his journey so late in the year. 'Why, Madam,' said he, 'you know Mr. Boswell must attend the Court of Session, and it does not rise till the twelfth of August.' She said, with some sharpness, 'I *know nothing* of Mr. Boswell.' Poor Lady Lucy Douglas, to whom I mentioned this, observed, 'She knew *too much* of Mr. Boswell.' I shall make no remark on her Grace's speech. I indeed felt it as rather too severe; but when I recollected that my punishment was inflicted by so dignified a beauty, I had that kind of consolation which a man would feel who is strangled by a *silken cord*." * On the whole we may perhaps conclude that Boswell derived far more pleasure than dissatisfaction from mingling in this mighty Douglas fray.

20] EDINBURGH, *22nd July*, 1767.

MY DEAREST TEMPLE,—Your impatience is not greater than mine. Every hour since I heard you was at Berwick I have been for taking wing to meet you. I only regret that this is Session time (Term time) with me, which of necessity enslaves me more or less. This Douglas cause is still put off by some new delay. The Lords are to examine to-morrow Isabel Walker, who is one of Lady Jane Douglas's maids, and is the only person now alive who has been accused as an accomplice in the alleged crime of *partus suppositio*; her examination will be solemn and important. Though I am not a counsel in that cause, yet I am much interested in it.

* "Life of Johnson"; date, October, 1773.

I doubt if it will be determined this week, but I am persuaded it will not be put off longer than next week. The week after next my father is Judge in the Outer House, and I shall have such a load of business, that we could be together very little; I would therefore have you to come and stay next week, when I hope to be, in a great measure, disengaged, and any hours that business absolutely demands shall be compensated by reading journals and letters, which you will delight to peruse; you will also have my account of Corsica. How happy am I that my Temple comes to give it his friendly revisal! My Lord Hailes has given me seven folio pages of remarks upon it: he says, "I am much entertained and instructed." Is not this noble? You may have very good lodging in the same stair with us: when I get your answer, fixing a particular day, I shall secure them for you. We shall live entirely in the luxury of philosophy and friendship. We shall have the society of Doctor Blair, Doctor Gregory, Doctor Ferguson, and our other *literati*, but we shall keep the best portion of our time sacred to our intimate affection. My dear friend, is it not a distinguished felicity to participate of the highest friendship as much as the greatest and best of other ages have done? This is literally the case with you and me: we are divine madmen to the dull and interested many. Will you come on Saturday or on Monday: Why, oh why, is it Session time? Temple, you must be at Auchinleck; you must see my charming bride. If you cannot return in autumn, pray resolve to take a ride now, and, on pretence of viewing the seat of your friend, view also the woman who has his heart. Come; you have the fire of the Spaniard, I know you have: oh, think of this!

Ever most sincerely yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—My Circean charmer will probably be here by the time you come: you must see her. I have a great deal to tell you. My Signora is indeed a wonderful creature; you shall know all. But again let me entreat of you to take one romantic ride, to oblige, most essentially, your most cordial friend.

Sir Alexander Dick—a *Corycius senex*, quite a classical man, and much of an Italian in pleasantness of disposition—has a fine seat just a mile from town; he is very desirous to see Mr. Temple; we shall be quite at home there. Well, I never was happier. Adieu, till we meet.

21] EDINBURGH, *Friday, 26th June* [*?July*], 1767.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—The first thing I must do is to defend myself against a charge of affected importance. Yes, indeed, I do say neither Mr. Yorke nor Mr. Norton can be busier than I shall be the week that my father sits as Judge in the Outer House; for you must know that the absurdity of mankind makes nineteen out of twenty employ the son of the Judge before whom their cause is heard;* and you must take it along with you that I am as yet but a very raw counsellor, so that a moderate share of business is really a load to me. So, my dear Temple, you are wrong. Never suspect that I can be a bit better to you than I am. You know me too well, and I am perfectly satisfied with the genuine esteem which you have for me. I may perhaps now and then assume some airs, but it is strange that it should be so; but undoubtedly we are very well pleased that those who cannot admire us for what we truly possess, should admire us for what we do

* That this is not the experience of those who have had opportunities of watching the distribution of business at the English Bar may safely be affirmed. Boswell however had probably *some* grounds for his assertion.

not. Thus far my defence; and now, my ever dear friend, let me enjoy the agreeable prospect of our meeting. I have secured lodgings for you when you arrive; you are to choose whether you will have one large room, with a large alcove bed-place, or two rooms. As you are to stay immediately above us, Thomas will always be ready to attend upon you, as I suppose you will not bring a servant with you.

I would not cloud my present frame of mind with any gloomy reflection that concerns either you or myself; it is better to communicate them when we meet, when our mutual sympathy and friendly warmth may temper and relieve them. [The letter then proceeds, and with very unnecessary particularity, with a narration of his getting "quite intoxicated on Tuesday last drinking Miss Blair's health (for that is the name of my angelic princess)," and the detail of follies which he committed while in this condition. However he adds,—"But I am abashed, and determined to keep the strictest watch over my passions." He then closes his epistle as follows :—]

You must resolve to visit my goddess. You are a stranger, and may do a romantic thing. You shall have consultation guineas, as an ambassador has his appointments. You see how I use you. In short, between us two, all rules and all maxims are suspended. Pray prepare yourself for this adventure: we shall settle it, I hope; I cannot go with you though. You are to see our country for a jaunt, upon my recommendation, etc. Dearest friend,

Ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

This is Friday. If you write me a line to-morrow, I shall have it on Monday by dinner-time.

The itinerary provided here by Boswell for his friend, and the programme of the conversations he was to support with Miss Blair, must have been somewhat formidable, especially as he is enjoined "to be a man of as much ease as possible," and to "take notes; perhaps you now fix me for life."

One of the topics suggested for Mr. Temple's discussion leaves it uncertain whether Boswell was willing to excuse his irregularities on the score of a predisposition to insanity, or whether he was perhaps really suspicious of possessing a peculiar mental constitution analogous to disease of the brain.

Instructions for Mr. Temple, on his Tour to Auchinleck and Adamtown.

He will set out in the fly on Monday morning, and reach Glasgow by noon. Put up at Graham's, and ask for the horses bespoke by Mr. Boswell. Take tickets for the Friday's fly. Eat some cold victuals. Set out for Kingswell, to which you have good road; arrived there, get a guide to put you through the muir to Loudoun; from thence Thomas knows the road to Auchinleck, where the worthy overseer, Mr. James Bruce, will receive you. Be easy with him, and you will like him much; expect but moderate entertainment, as the family is not at home.

Tuesday.—See the house; look at the front: choose your room; advise as to pavilions. Have James Bruce to conduct you to the cab-house; to the old castle; to where I am to make the superb grotto; up the river to Broomsholm; the natural bridge; the grotto; the grotto-walk down to the Gothic bridge: anything else he pleases.

Wednesday.—Breakfast at eight; set out at nine; Thomas will bring you to Adamtown a little after eleven. Send up your name; if possible, put up your

horses there, they can have cut grass; if not, Thomas will take them to Mountain, a place a mile off, and come back and wait at dinner. Give Miss Blair my letter. Salute her and her mother; ask to walk. See the place fully; think what improvements should be made. Talk of my mare, the purse, the chocolate. Tell, you are my very old and intimate friend. *Praise me for my good qualities,—you know them; but talk also how odd, how inconstant, how impetuous, how much accustomed to women of intrigue. Ask gravely, Pray don't you imagine there is something of madness in that family? Talk of my various travels, German princes, —Voltaire and Rousseau.* Talk of my father; my strong desire to have my own house. Observe her well. See, how amiable! Judge if she would be happy with your friend. Think of me as the great man at Adamtown,—quite classical too! Study the mother. Remember well what passes. Stay tea. At six, order horses and go to New Mills, two miles from Loudoun; but if they press you to stay all night, do it. Be a man of as much ease as possible. Consider what a romantic expedition you are on; take notes; perhaps you now fix me for life.

Thursday.—Return to Glasgow from New Mills or from Adamtown. See High Church, New Church College, and particularly the paintings, and put half-a-crown into the box at the door. My friend, Mr. Robert Fowles, will show you all.

Friday.—Come back in the fly. Bring your portmanteau here. We shall settle where you are to lodge.

N.B.—You are to keep an exact account of your charges.

22] EDINBURGH, 29*th July*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I have more reason to make an apology than you had, for I have been longer negligent. Let us guard against this vice, and not subject ourselves to continual returns of remorse to a certain degree; for every instance of our doing those things which we ought not to have done, and leaving undone those things which we ought to have done, is attended with more or less of what is truly remorse. [This doctrine, which has the merit of truth if not of novelty, Boswell proceeds to illustrate by the state of his own health, which was suffering from the effects of dissipation. The reflection however which follows the confession of his folly is too extraordinary to be omitted.] Will you forgive me, Temple, (says he) for exclaiming, that all this evil is too much for the offence of my getting drunk, because I would drink Miss Blair's health in a large bumper? But general laws often seem hard in particular cases.

[The letter then proceeds with matter concerning his love for Miss Blair.]

I have not heard from Adamtown since you left me. I wrote to Miss Blair above a week ago, and thanked her for the polite reception she gave my friend. I told her how much you was charmed with her, and that I should not probably get a letter from you without some fine thing said of her. I made your compliments to her and Mrs. Blair. What can be the matter? Probably the letter you carried has been thought so strange, and so distant from any rational scheme, that it has been resolved no longer to carry on so friendly and easy an intercourse with me. Or what would you say if the formal Nabob whom you saw there has struck in, and so good a

bird in hand has made the heiress quit the uncertain prospect of catching the bird in the bush? I am curious to see how this matter will turn out. The mare, the purse, the chocolate, where are they now? I am certainly not deeply in love, for I am entertained with this dilemma like another chapter in my adventures, though I do own to you that I have a more serious attachment to her than I ever had to anybody; for here every flower is united. Perhaps the dilemma will be agreeably solved, so let me not allow my mind to waver. At any rate you have a tolerable hold upon me. Smith is here just now; his "Jurisprudence" will be out in a year and a half. Hoping to hear of a very happy event being at length certain,

I am ever,
Most affectionately yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

23] EDINBURGH, 11*th August*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I sincerely congratulate you on your marriage, which, from your manner of writing, I take to be a very good, comfortable situation. You have removed half my apprehensions, and I suppose I shall likewise by-and-by experience the agreeable union. But what can you say in defence of this heiress? Not a word from her since you were there. You carried her one letter from me, and I wrote her another a week after, neither of which have been answered. You must know that my present unhappy distemper, joined with a cold, brought on a most terrible fever, and I was for several days in a most alarming situation; I am not yet up, though I am in a fair way of recovery from every evil. Well, but to return. I wrote Miss Blair on

Wednesday the 5th, that I was afraid Mr. Temple had told her my faults too honestly, so that she was mistaken in having too good an opinion of me; that however she had punished me (only think of that, Temple!) too much; that I felt it the more, because I had been for some days confined to my bed by a feverish disorder, and had been dreaming a great deal of her.

Now, my dear friend, suppose what you please; suppose her affections changed, as those of women too often are; suppose her offended at my Spanish stateliness; suppose her to have resolved to be more reserved and coy in order to make me more in love; nay, suppose her betrothed to that man of copper, the formal Nabob,—still, politeness obliged her to give me some answer or other: yet it is now four posts since that answer might have come. Is it not strange, after such frankness and affability? What shall I think? As I am quite in the dark, I will take no resolution against her till you advise me, for I still cannot help thinking she is the best woman to be my wife I have ever seen. Perhaps her mysterious conduct may be quite cleared up.

A letter from my Signora at Siena, written with all the warmth of Italian affection! I am a strange man, but ever your most sincere friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—David Johnston and all here wish you joy; so does Sir Alexander Dick and Dr. Boswell. The honest Doctor thinks you a good, quiet philosopher, a kind of Parson Adams. Inimitable! Wyvill was so good as to call when I was so very ill. I shall send to him, and have him to chat awhile. I am to be a week or two here, quiet and studious. Mr. Dilly,

bookseller in the Poultry, has purchased my "Account of Corsica." I receive one hundred guineas three months after publication. I shall be close employed all this autumn in revising and correcting the proof-sheets. Let me hear from you soon.

CHAPTER V

1767

Courting Miss Blair—"Dorando"—Matrimony—Mode of preserving a reasonable attachment to Miss Blair—Disagreement between father and son as to Boswell's merits—The "Corsican Journal"—Lord Baltimore's tour—Lovers' quarrels—Boswell's costume for courting—Miss Blair repudiated—Zelide and Miss Bosville reconsidered—Miss Blair replaced—Dialogue between the Prince and Princess—Its result.

THE following Chapter contains a most absurd confession by Boswell as to his courtship of Miss Blair, and shows how his egotism and total want of balance in character affected his conduct in this affair. It is, indeed, an extraordinary phenomenon which he here exhibits: we see a rational man, apparently conscious of the motives which are actuating him, which he also discusses in these letters with considerable minuteness and truthfulness, but of their moral value he seems entirely ignorant.

He also dwells much on his own "singular humour," which perhaps, if he were not so evidently aware of it, might afford some extenuation of his behaviour. He is, moreover, willing to offer as an explanation for his irregularities "the madness in his composition," which he either may or may not have believed in. The time which he now fixes for controlling himself and becoming a dignified man, viz., when his "Corsican Journal" should be published, was unfortunately extended from time to time for an indefinite period.

24] EDINBURGH, *25th August*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Marriage is like to lose me a friend; for I have not had a line from you for near a

fortnight, although my last letter was full of anxiety with regard to my amiable Miss B——. What can have occasioned so long a silence? I conclude, because you are not able to make an apology for the conduct of a lady for whom you are a kind of surety; I will therefore relieve you from this dilemma, by informing you that she has made an apology herself. On Monday se'nnight I had the pleasure to receive a most agreeable letter from her, in which she told me that my letter to her had lain eight days at the post-house at Ayr, which was the occasion of her seeming neglect. You see, my friend, how appearances are often very deceitful. This never occurred either to you or me. I have refrained from communicating this to you from a curiosity to see how you would endeavour to excuse her conduct; but, since I have waited so long in vain, I now make you as easy as myself. I would send you the letter, but it says so many fine things of you, that I will not give you so much pleasure till I hear from you again.

Wyvill was so good as to come and sit a whole afternoon with me: he is an admirable critic on my account of Corsica. He is gone on a jaunt to Glasgow, etc., with his father and sister; he sends you his best compliments. I hope to have him with me again in a day or two.

I ever am, my dear Temple,
Your most faithful friend,
JAMES BOSWELL.

25] EDINBURGH, 28*th August*, 1767.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It seems you and I, like the magnetic needles of the two friends, have both turned towards each other at the same time. You would receive, the day before yesterday, a letter from me complaining

of your long silence, and I have, by the same post, received a very kind one from you.

Are you not happy to find that all is well between the Prince of Auchinleck and his fair neighbouring Princess? In short, Sir, I am one of the most fortunate men in the world. As Miss Blair is my great object at present, and you are a principal minister in forwarding the alliance, I enclose you the latest papers on the subject. You will find the letter I wrote her when ill, where you will see a Scots word *roving*, from the French *rêver*, as if to dream awake. I put it down as a good English word, not having looked in Johnson. You will next find the lady's answer; then a long letter from me, which required an extraordinary degree of good sense and temper to answer it with an agreeable propriety; then her answer, which exceeds my highest expectations. Read these papers in their order, and let me have your Excellency's opinion. Am I not now as well as I can be? What condescension! what a desire to please! She studies my disposition, and resolves to be cautious, &c. Adorable woman! Don't you think I had better not write again till I see her! I shall go west in a fortnight; but I can hardly restrain myself from writing to her in transport. I will go to Adamtown, and stay a week. I will have no disguise; we shall see each other fairly; we are both independent; we have no temptation to marry but to make each other happy. Let us be sure if that would be the consequence. Was it not very good in my worthy father to visit my mistress in my absence? I have thanked him for it, and begged he may send his chaise for Mrs. Blair and her to come and stay some days with him. I am recovering well, and my spirits are admirable. I shall send you two "Dorandos" by the carrier; he does not go till Thursday. Honest

Johnston, who sits by me, sends you his most sincere congratulations. Pray make my best compliments to Mrs. Temple. I ever am, dear Temple,

Your most affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

["Dorando: A Spanish Tale." The brochure founded on the Douglas Cause, and his championship of the youthful claimant was called "Dorando: A Spanish Tale." After three editions it was suppressed by the Court of Session, and this shilling booklet is now sought in vain. It was reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July 1767. The best modern account of the cause it championed is in Horace Bleackley's "Beautiful Duchess" (1907).]

26] EDINBURGH, *29th August*, 1767.

DEAR TEMPLE,—My letter yesterday was so full of the Princess, that I had not room for anything else. I cannot however delay expressing the great satisfaction I feel at your prospect of happiness in a married state. By what you say of Mrs. Temple, I have no doubt of your living agreeably, as I am persuaded you will make an excellent husband.

I like your way of representing marriage, plainly and simply; for we have a strange custom of looking upon it as something quite mysterious, and have therefore twice as many apprehensions as we need have; for I do say we must have some apprehensions when engaging to have a fidelity and common interest for life. Not only will you be happy, but you will make your friend so too, by showing him the way to calm and permanent felicity, as far as this life will allow.

The packet I sent you yesterday would furnish you with an excellent subject for a homily, as worthy Sir Alexander said. My old and intimate friend, can I

be better? Can you suppose any woman in Britain with whom more circumstances could unite to engage me? All my objections arise from my own faults. Tell me, can I honestly ask so fine a woman to risk her happiness with a man of my character?

I am so well that I hope to be abroad in a few days. My health must be restored in the first place; then I have Mrs. —— to take care of. You may say what you please, but she is a good girl: she is a contented, cheerful temper, and is perfectly generous; she has not had a single guinea from me since you were here, nor has she given me the least hint as if she wanted money. I am indeed fond of her; but some tender feelings must be forgotten. She comes and drinks tea with me once or twice a week. Next month will probably fix our alliance, which may be completed next year.

I am glad Nicholls is so good a man. Do you wish to have the speeches of our Judges? they are imperfect: you will soon have a better edition. With compliments to Mrs. Temple,

I ever am yours, etc.,

JAMES BOSWELL.

27] EDINBURGH, *9th September*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—How kind are you to take such a concern in what interests me! We have been to blame, you say; and throughout the whole of your last letter you talk in the plural number, as if the affection between Miss Blair and me were of equal importance to you as to your friend. I do think her the finest woman I have seen, take her altogether, nor could I wish to be happier in a wife.

But in this strange world it is hardly possible to be happy: if uneasiness does not arise from ourselves, it will come to us from others. How unaccountable is

it that my father and I should be so ill together! He is a man of sense and a man of worth; but from some unhappy turn in his disposition, he is much dissatisfied with a son whom you know.

I write to him with warmth, with an honest pride, wishing that he should think of me as I am; but my letters shock him, and every expression in them is interpreted unfavourably. To give you an instance, I send you a letter I had from him a few days ago. How galling is it to the friend of Paoli to be treated so! I have answered him in my own style: I will be myself. I have said, "Why think so strangely of my expression of being *Primus Mantuæ?* Suppose I were married to Miss Blair, would I not be *Primus Mantuæ* at Adamtown? and why not? Would you not be pleased to see your son happy in independence, cultivating his little farm and ornamenting his nuptial villa, and filling himself one day, as well as possible, the place of a much greater man?"

Temple, would you not like such a son? would you not feel a glow of parental joy? I know you would; and yet my worthy father writes to me in the manner you see, with that Scots strength of sarcasm which is peculiar to a North Briton. But he is offended with that fire which you and I cherish as the essence of our souls; and how can I make him happy? Am I bound to do so at the expense, not of this or the other agreeable wish, but at the expense of myself. The time was when such a letter from my father as the one I enclose would have depressed; but I am now firm, and, as my revered friend Mr. Samuel Johnson used to say, I feel the privileges of an independent human being; however, it is hard that I cannot have the pious satisfaction of being well with my father. I send you an extract from a letter of yours which gave him a

very bad opinion of Temple in the year 1759; it will divert you to read it at this distance of time. Pray return it, together with my father's letter, by the carrier who brings you this, and "Dorando," of which I have sent only one copy, as I have few here. When you get to London I shall desire Mr. Wilkie, my publisher, to let you have two or three of them. Let me know if packets come safe by your carrier.

Sir James Steuart's book is of such a size, and treats of subjects so deep, that I confess I have not read it. Those who are acquainted with such abstruse questions allow him considerable merit, although his opinions are sometimes singular and fanciful; he has a very strange and groundless paragraph against the Corsicans, as if they had been so luxurious as to be obliged to sell their island to the Genoese. I shall correct this mistake in my account of Corsica.

The press is opened, and my book is fairly set agoing.

"O navis, referet in mare te novum!"

The proof-sheets amuse me finely at breakfast. I cannot help hoping for some applause. You will be kind enough to communicate to me all that you hear, and to conceal *from me all censure.** I would not however dislike to hear impartial corrections; perhaps Mr. Gray may say something to you of it.† The last part of my work, entitled the "Journal of a Tour to Corsica," is in my opinion the most valuable; you have not had an opportunity to see it. So soon as I find a sure hand I will send you it; and you must do me

* *Sic in orig.*

† We have seen Mr. Gray *did* say something about it in his letter to Walpole, but not quite what Boswell would like to have heard: *ante*, p. 60.

the favour to peruse it with care, and write your observations and corrections on a separate paper, referring to the pages, as my Lord Hailes did. Pray inquire and let me know if you can get a sure hand by whom you can venture to send it to Mr. Wyvill, who is also to revise it for me. Did you see him as he passed? He promised to me that he would call upon you.

I rejoice to hear of the continuance of your contentment. Laugh as you please, or reason as you please, I think your present way of life very comfortable; reading little, riding, walking, eating, drinking, and sleeping well, and enjoying the society of a wife whom you love.

> "Parson, these goods in thy possessing,
> Are better than the bishop's blessing."

My dear friend, I weary you with a letter of an intolerable length: I cannot however conclude without saying one word of the Princess. I shall write to her to-morrow, and shall soon go and throw myself at her feet. I offer my best compliments to Mrs. Temple, to whom I hope to pay my respects next spring at Mamhead. My old friend, at this moment our first acquaintance at Hunter's class comes full into my mind: what a crowd of ideas since! Adieu.

JAMES BOSWELL.

28] EDINBURGH, *22nd September*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I am really uneasy at not having heard from you since I sent you a packet by the Berwick carrier. Thomas took the packet to him on Thursday se'nnight; it contained "Dorando," a long letter from your old friend, with one from his father. Pray write to me, and if you have not received the

packet, make the carrier give an account what he has done with it, for I should be vexed to think that it has fallen into the hands of strangers. If my uneasiness is only occasioned by your indolence I shall be glad, though I shall not spare you.

I have written to the Princess in a style more and more as you would wish; I expect to hear from her soon. I have received a most polite letter from Sir James Steuart, in answer to one which I wrote to him with regard to a passage in his "Political Economy," which is injurious to the Corsicans. I shall settle that matter in my book, in terms very respectful to Sir James.

I see in the newspapers a specimen of a "Tour to the East" by Lord Baltimore, just published; it seems to be written with the most careless ease, but with vivacity, and now and then you meet with admirable little anecdotes. Lord Baltimore has had a very good opportunity to know something of Eastern manners; he is a man of singular independence and whim; he lived a long time at Constantinople, wore the dress of the country, kept his seraglio of the finest women, and, in short, enjoyed the existence of a Turk. Do you, my dear Temple, enjoy the existence of a worthy clergyman of the Church of England. Make my best compliments to your one wife, and believe me

Ever your affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

29] EDINBURGH, *2nd October*, 1767.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—Your letter from London relieved me from a great deal of anxiety, both on your account and the letters, which would have made a bad appearance to strangers. How can you let indolence

occasion me so much uneasiness! Your letter came late, night before last. It was not in my power to get £30 ready for last night's post; you have along with this a draft for that sum.

I have sent you a copy of my "Corsican Journal," which you will do me the favour to peruse in the shades of Mamhead, in the tranquillity of your Rectory, and write down on a separate sheet of paper your remarks and corrections, as my Lord Hailes did; you need not take the trouble to mark both page and line, only page. So soon as you have finished six sheets, send me your remarks, and transmit the sheets to Wyvill, with franks, addressed to me, along with them, so that he may send them to me. Wyvill, I fancy, will be in Essex. I expect a letter from him every day, with his address if he is not, which I shall send to you; his address in Essex is, "Rector of Black Notely, near Braintree, Essex." You will find many various readings in my "Journal,"—tell which you prefer. Now, Temple, I trust you will be diligent and clever to aid your friend, and will let me see that, had Fortune made you a Minister of State, you would have been an able and expeditious one. I allow you a day to three sheets. Transmit to Wyvill six, and six to me, [with] your remarks. Pray be my Atticus. I am very near well. I go west on Wednesday. There is again a little silence in the Princess. Compliments to Mrs. Temple.

Ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

30] ADAMTOWN, *5th November*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—The pleasure of your countenance, in reading the date of this letter, is before me at this moment. I imagine it cannot be less than I felt

glowing in my eyes when I received the last of your letters, with the elegant, and I am fully persuaded, sincere commendations of my "Corsican Journal." In short, I am sitting in the room with my Princess, who is at this moment a finer woman than ever she appeared to me before. But, my valuable friend, be not too certain of your Boswell's felicity, for indeed he has little of it at present. You must know that Miss Blair's silence, which I mentioned to you, was a silence notwithstanding of my having written three letters to her, and—(here supper interrupted me; the rest is written in my own room, the same where you slept)—when a former quarrel should have taught her that she had a lover of an anxious temper. For ten days I was in a fever, but at last I broke the enchantment. However I would not be too sullen in my pride; I wrote to her from Auchinleck, and *wished her joy*, etc.; she answered me, with the same ease as ever, that I had no occasion. I then wrote her a strange Sultanish letter, very cold and very formal, and did not go to see her for near three weeks. At last I am here, and our meeting has been such as you paint in your last but one. I have been here one night; she insisted on my staying another. I am dressed in green and gold. I have my chaise, *in which I sit alone like Mr. Gray*, and Thomas rides by me in a claret-coloured suit with a silver-laced hat. But the Princess and I have not yet made up our quarrel; she talks lightly of it. I am resolved to have a serious conversation with her to-morrow morning. If she can still remain indifferent as to what has given me much pain, she is not the woman I thought her, and from to-morrow morning shall I be severed from her as a lover. I shall just bring myself, I hope, to a good, easy tranquillity. If she feels as I wish her to do, I shall adore her while

my blood is warm. You shall hear fully from Auchinleck.

We have talked a great deal of you. She has made me laugh heartily, with her ideas of you before you arrived,—an old friend, an English clergyman. She imagined she was to see a fat man, with a large white whig, a man something like Mr. Whitefield. Upon honour, she said so; but she and Mrs. Blair were quite charmed with the young parson, with his neat black periwig and his polite address. They send you a thousand compliments. With my best compliments to Mrs. Temple,

I am, ever yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

Boswell, having heard three people at Ayr agree in abusing the young lady to whom he was so devoted and was paying his addresses, and growing tired of his position towards her, now determines to give up the "Scots lass," and hopes "to find an Englishwoman who will be sensible of my merit, and will strive [study] to please my singular humour."

31] AUCHINLECK, *Sunday, 8th November*, 1767.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wrote you from Adamtown, and told you how it was with the Princess and me. Next morning I told her that I had complained to you that she would not make up our last quarrel; but she did not appear in the least inclined to own herself in the wrong. I confess that, between pride and love, I was unable to speak to her but in a very awkward manner. I came home on Friday; yesterday I was extremely uneasy. That I might give her a fair opportunity, I sent her a letter, of which I enclose you a copy. Could the proud Boswell say more than you

will see there? In the evening I got her answer: it was written with an art and indifference astonishing from so young a lady. "I have not yet found out that I was to blame. If you have been uneasy on my account, I am indeed sorry for it; I should be sorry to give any person uneasiness, far more one whose cousin and friend I shall always be." She refused sending me the lock, "because (in the eyes of the world) it is improper;" and she says very cool things upon that head. What think you of such a return to a letter full of warmth and admiration? In short, Temple, she is cunning, and sees my weakness. But I now see her, and though I cannot but suffer severely, I from this moment resolve to think no more of her. I send you the copy of a note which goes to her to-morrow morning. Wish me joy, my good friend, of having discovered the snake before it was too late. I should have been ruined had I made such a woman my wife. Luckily for me, a neighbour who came to Auchinleck last night told me that he had heard three people at Ayr agree in abusing her as a jilt. What a risk have I run! However, as there is still a possibility that all this may be mistake and malice, I shall behave to her in a very respectful manner, and shall never say a word against her but to you. After this, I shall be upon my guard against ever indulging the least fondness for a Scots lass; I am a soul of a more southern frame. I may perhaps be fortunate enough to find an English-woman who will be sensible of my merit, and will study to please my singular humour. By what you write of Mrs. Temple, I wish I had such a wife, though indeed your temper is so much better than mine that perhaps she and I would have quarrelled before this time, had we been married when you were. Love is a perfect fever of the mind. I question if any man has been

more tormented with it than myself. Even at this moment, as I write, my heart is torn by vexing thoughts of this fine Princess of ours; but I may take comfort, since I have so often recovered.

You are too hard upon me in judging of the differences between father and son. I never wrote to him that I would take no pleasure in country affairs till he was dead; I said indeed that I should hardly give my mind to them till I had a place of my own; and, I added, Auchinleck will be well taken care of while you live, and you may be assured that it shall not be neglected when you are gone. You see how a temper anyhow out of tune can interpret. Perhaps I do the same by the Princess; however I promise you I shall be conscientious in doing a great deal to make my worthy father easy and happy. He and I are at present very well; it is merely a jarring of temper which occasions our difficulties.

One word more of the Princess. The two last days I was with her she was more engaging than you can conceive. She and I had the most agreeable conversation together, and she assured me she was not going to be married to any other man; and yet, Temple, with what a cold reserve does she behave! Let her go!

Do you know I had a letter from Zelide the other day, written in English, and showing that an old flame is easily rekindled; but you will not hear of her,—what say you? Ah! my friend, shall I have Miss Bosville? You see, I am the old man. I am much obliged to you for your remarks on my "Corsican Journal." Please return the letters enclosed. My compliments to Mrs. Temple.

Ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

32] STRATHAVEN, *9th November*, 1767.

MY EVER DEAR TEMPLE,—Having left Auchinleck this morning in a hurry, I brought my letters to you in my pocket so far on the road; and, as your kind packet of the 30th October has overtaken me, I have opened one of my letters, and add a few lines. Upon my soul, the madness, of which I have a strong degree in my composition, is at present so heightened by love that I am absolutely deprived of judgment. How could I possibly be in a rage at the Princess's last letter! I now sit calmly in this village, and read it with delight; what could she do more? Like you, she thought I could not expect to hear from her when she expected me every day at Adamtown; therefore she was not to blame, and she had too much spirit to own herself in the wrong when she was conscious of no fault. Yet how amiably does she comply with my request, and tell me that she is sorry that I have been uneasy on her account. "I shall always be a cousin and friend. I hope you will not look upon this as a new quarrel." I love her, Temple, with my whole heart; I am entirely in her power. Were she a woman of such a temper as I have, how might she fret against me! "He comes to Auchinleck, and is near three weeks without coming to see me. When he comes, not a tender word, not one expression of a lover. How can I allow my affections to fix on such a man." She has defended herself very well in refusing me the lock; I shall get it from her at Edinburgh. Oh, my friend, be watchful over me in this precious period! If she does not write to me she is certainly unfeeling, and I must at any price preserve my own character; if she writes as I can imagine, I will consecrate myself to her for ever. I must have her to learn the harpsichord and French; she shall be one of the first women in the island. But let me take care; I

know not what is in store. Do you think it possible she can have any scheme of marrying another? I will not suspect her. Your remarks are of great service to me. I am glad you show my "Journal" to Lord Lisburne; but I must have my great preceptor, Mr. Johnson, introduced: Lord Hailes has approved of it. Temple, I wish to be at last an uniform, pretty man. I am astonishingly so already, but I wish to be a man who deserves Miss B. (by the bye, your expression, "Be perpetually with Miss B.," is fine; it made me more affectionate towards you than ever). I am always for fixing some period for my perfection as far as possible. Let it be when my account of Corsica is published; I shall then have a character which I must support. I will swear, like an ancient disciple of Pythagoras, to observe silence; I will be grave and reserved, though cheerful and communicative, of what is *verum atque decens*. One great fault of mine is talking at random; I will guard against it. My feudal Seigneurs are printed off in the account. Adieu, my best friend! I thank God for such a friend.

Ever yours,

J. B.

33] EDINBURGH, *16th December*, 1767.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—You have reason to blame me for a too long silence, after having received all your friendly remarks on my "Journal," and while you was uncertain as to my negotiations with the Princess. I am sincerely obliged to you for polishing my Corsican monument; it is now complete, and I would fain hope it will do both the brave islanders and myself a great deal of honour. As to the Princess, I sent the letter which you returned. She did not write, but bid her

aunt tell me that she and I were as good friends as ever. This did not satisfy me, and for several weeks did I strive to break my chain; at last she came to town, and I have had a long conversation with her. She assured me she did not believe me serious, or that I was uneasy, and that it was my own fault if ever she and I quarrelled; I in short adored her, and was convinced she was not to blame. I told her that henceforth she would entertain no doubt that I sincerely loved her, and, Temple, I ventured to seize her hand. She is really the finest woman to me I ever saw. I am just now going to meet her at the concert, after which I sup with her at Lord Kaimes's, along with her cousin the beautiful young Duchess of Gordon; I am therefore in a hurry and a flutter, and must break off, but in a day or two I shall write you fully. In the meantime, my friend, wish me joy of my present peace of mind, and make my compliments to the woman to whom I see you owe a great deal. Adieu, my best friend!

Ever yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

34] EDINBURGH, *24th December*, 1767.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—In my last I told you that, after I had resolved to give up with the Princess for ever, I resolved first to see her. I was so lucky as to have a very agreeable interview, and was convinced by her that she was not to blame. This happened on a Thursday; that evening her cousin and most intimate friend, the Duchess of Gordon, came to town. Next day I was at the concert with them, and afterwards supped at Lord Kaimes's. The Princess appeared distant and reserved; I could hardly believe that it was the same woman with whom I had been quite easy the day

before; I was then uneasy. Next evening I was at the Play with them; it was "Othello." I sat close behind the Princess, and at the most affecting scenes I pressed my hand upon her waist; she was in tears, and rather leaned to me. The jealous Moor described my very soul. I often spoke to her of the torment she saw before her; still I thought her distant, and still I felt uneasy. On Sunday the Duchess went away. I met the Princess at church; she was distant as before. I passed the evening at her aunt's, where I met a cousin of my Princess, a young lady of Glasgow, who had been with us at Adamtown. She told me she had something to communicate, and she then said my behaviour to the Princess was such, that Mrs. B. and her daughter did not know how to behave to me; that it was not honourable to engage a young lady's affections while I kept myself free; in short, the good cousin persuaded me that the Princess had formed an attachment for me, and she assured me the Nabob had been refused. On Monday forenoon I waited on Miss B. I found her alone, and she did not seem distant; I told her that I was most sincerely in love with her, and that I only dreaded those faults which I had acknowledged to her. I asked her seriously if she now believed me in earnest. She said she did. I then asked her to be candid and fair, as I had been with her, and to tell me if she had any particular liking for me. What think you, Temple, was her answer? "No; I really have no particular liking for you; I like many people as well as you." Temple, you must have it in the genuine dialogue.

Boswell.—Do you indeed? Well, I cannot help it; I am obliged to you for telling me so in time. I am sorry for it.

Princess.—I like Jeany Maxwell (Duchess of Gordon) better than you.

B.—Very well; but do you like no man better than me?

P.—No.

B.—Is it possible that you may like me better than other men?

P.—I don't know what is possible.

(By this time I had risen and placed myself by her, and was in real agitation.)

B.—I'll tell you what, my dear Miss Blair, I love you so much that I am very unhappy if you cannot love me. I must, if possible, endeavour to forget you. What would you have me do?

P.—I really don't know what you should do.

B.—It is certainly possible that you may love me; and if you shall ever do so, I shall be the happiest man in the world. Will you make a fair bargain with me? If you should happen to love me, will you own it?

P.—Yes.

B.—And if you should happen to love another, will you tell me immediately, and help me to make myself easy?

P.—Yes, I will.

B.—Well, you are very good (often squeezing and kissing her fine hand, while she looked at me with those beautiful black eyes).

P.—I may tell you, as a cousin, what I would not tell to another man.

B.—You may indeed. You are very fond of Auchinleck, that is one good circumstance.

P.—I confess I am. I wish I liked you as well as I do Auchinleck.

B.—I have told you how fond I am of you; but unless you like me sincerely, I have too much spirit to ask you to live with me, as I know that you do not

like me. If I could have you this moment for my wife, I would not.

P.—I should not like to put myself in your offer though.

B.—Remember, you are both my cousin and my mistress, you must make me suffer as little as possible, as it may happen that I may engage your affections. I should think myself a most dishonourable man if I were not now in earnest, and, remember, I depend upon your sincerity; and whatever happens, you and I shall never have another quarrel.

P.—Never.

B.—And I may come and see you as much as I please?

P.—Yes.

My worthy friend, what sort of a scene was this? It was most curious. She said she would submit to her husband in most things. She said that to see one loving her would go far to make her love that person; but she would not talk anyhow positively, for she never had felt the uneasy anxiety of love. We were an hour and a half together, and seemed pleased all the time. I think she behaved with spirit and propriety. I admire her more than ever. She intended to go to her aunt's, twelve miles from town, next day: her jaunt was put off for some days. Yesterday I saw her again; I was easy and cheerful, and just endeavoured to make myself agreeable.

This forenoon I was again with her. I told her how uneasy I was that she should be three weeks absent. She said I might amuse myself well enough: she seemed quite indifferent. I was growing angry again, but I recollected how she had candidly told me that she had no particular liking for me.

Temple, where am I now? What is the meaning

of this? I drank tea with her this afternoon, and sat near four hours with her mother and her. Our conversation turned all on the manner in which two people might live. She has the justest ideas. She said she knew me now; she could laugh me out of my ill-humour; she could give Lord Auchinleck a lesson how to manage me. Temple, what does the girl mean? We talked a good deal of you: you are a prodigious favourite. Now, my worthy friend, assist me. You know my strange temper and impetuous disposition; shall I boldly shake her off, as I fear I cannot be patient and moderate? or, am I not bound in honour to suffer some time, and watch her heart? How long must I suffer? how must I do? When she comes back, shall I affect any indifference, to try her? or, shall I rather endeavour to inspire her with my flame? Is it not below me to be made uneasy by her? or, may I not be a philosopher, and, without uneasiness, take her, if she likes me, and if not, let her alone? During her absence, I have time to get a return from you. It is certainly possible that all she has said may be literally true; but is not her indifference a real fault? Consult Mrs. Temple, and advise me. Amidst all this love, I have been wild as ever. * * * Trust me in time coming; I give you my word of honour, Temple: I have nothing else to save me.

I have this day received a large packet from Paoli, with a letter, an elegant letter, from the University of Corte, and also an extract of an oration pronounced this year at the opening of the University, in which oration I am celebrated in a manner which does me the greatest honour. I think, Temple, I have had my full share of fame; yet my book is still to come, and I cannot doubt its doing me credit. Come, why do I allow myself to be uneasy for a Scots lass? Rouse

me, my friend! Kate has not fire enough; she does not know the value of her lover! If on her return she still remains cold, she does not deserve me. I will not quarrel with her: she cannot help her defects: but I will break my enchanting fetters. To-morrow I shall be happy with my devotions. I shall think of you, and wish to be at Mamhead. Could you assist me to keep up my real dignity among the illiberal race of Scots lawyers? Adieu, my dearest friend! My best compliments to your amiable spouse.

J. B.

CHAPTER VI

1768–1773

Boswell marries—Dr. Johnson's opinion of Mrs. Boswell—Uxoriana—"Account of Corsica"—Trip to Ireland—Advertises his fashionable visits—Shakspeare jubilee—Resides at Edinburgh—Elected a member of "the Club"—Love affairs before his marriage—The Princess again and the Nabob—Corresponds with "the charming Dutchwoman"—Success of "account of Corsica"—Sets up his chariot—Visits from Hume and Johnson—Robertson's "Charles V."—"La Belle Irlandaise"—Mental conflict—Letters from the married Boswell—Hume upon history—Birth and death of a son—Boswell's married life.

ANOTHER very considerable interval here occurs in the correspondence: this period of Boswell's life was however a very important one. The most remarkable and fortunate step which he took was perhaps in the autumn of 1769, when he married Miss Margaret Montgomerie, a lady of whom frequent mention is made in the following letters. It would seem that her husband had good reason to be attached to her; but it was not in his nature to avoid making all who had intimate relation with him more or less ridiculous. For example, in his political pamphlet, the "Letter to the People of Scotland," we find his wife paraded in the midst of the writer's patriotic eloquence, in order to gratify his egotism. The passage occurs when he is speaking of the Earl of Eglintoun and his friends:—"Amongst those friends," says he, "I myself am one of the warmest, both as an enthusiast for ancient feudal attachment, and as having the honour and happiness *to be married to his Lordship's relation, a true Montgomerie, whom I esteem, whom I love, after fifteen years, as on the day when she gave me her hand.*" Again, in the same

letter, he describes "that brave Irishman," Captain Macbride, as "the cousin of my wife and the friend of my heart."

We find Dr. Johnson's opinion of the lady in a letter to Mrs. Thrale;* but the learned lexicographer's opinion was more valuable and trustworthy perhaps upon many other subjects than when he took it upon himself to pass judgment upon the wives of his friends, or indeed on ladies in general. Dr. Johnson describes Mrs. Boswell as having "the mien and manner of a gentlewoman, and such a person and mind as would not in any place either be admired or condemned. She is, in a proper degree, inferior to her husband; she cannot rival him, nor can he ever be ashamed of her." One can hardly accept the comparison in favour of Boswell in its full signification, for there is no ground for believing that she made herself either contemptible or ridiculous.

Boswell kept a book which he called "Uxoriana," in which the "good things" his wife said were preserved. Some of these, although at the husband's expense, were duly recorded. Thus, with reference to his indiscriminate admiration of Johnson, she remarks, that she had often seen a bear led by a man, but *never before a man led by a bear*. Mrs. Boswell, it would seem, endeavoured by her sarcasm thus to check her husband's absurd vanity, but not always without irritating him. On one occasion he says, when "I was warm, telling of my own consequence and generosity, my wife made some cool, humbling remark upon me; I flew into a violent passion; I said, 'If you throw cold water upon a plate of iron much heated, it will crack into shivers.'" †

There was apparently no great mutual regard between Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Boswell. The reader of the Life of the "big man" (as Goldsmith calls him) will remember a letter in which, after narrating his safe return from his tour in Scotland "without any incommodity, danger, or weariness," he tells Boswell, with reference to his departure from Auchinleck, "I know Mrs. Boswell wished me well to go; her wishes have not been disappointed." The foot-note which the biographer appends to this rather surly observation on a very hospitable host, is characteristic. In forming this opinion, he says, Dr.

* August 23rd, 1773.

† "Boswelliana," Philobiblion, vol. ii.

Johnson "showed a very acute penetration. My wife paid him the most assiduous and respectful attention while he was our guest, so that I wonder how he discovered her wishing his departure. The truth is, that his irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as turning the candles with their heads downwards when they did not burn bright enough and letting the wax drop on the carpet, could not but be disagreeable to a lady; besides, she had not that high admiration of him which was felt by most of those who knew him; and, what was very natural to a female mind, she thought he had too much influence over her husband. She once in a little warmth made, with more point than justice, this remark upon that subject,"—and he then repeats the simile just alluded to, of his being led by a bear.

Boswell had not been very successful in exciting the Doctor's interest in his nuptials; he had attempted to connect usefully the two positions which he now claimed to occupy,—of husband and biographer. He endeavoured in vain to persuade Dr. Johnson to discourse of the duties of a husband. "Although," says he, "I had promised myself a great deal of instructive conversation with him on the conduct of the married state, of which I had then a near prospect, he did not say much upon that topic. Mr. Seward heard him once say: 'A man has a very bad chance for happiness in that state, unless he marries a woman of very strong and fixed principles of religion.' He maintained to me, contrary to the common notion, that a woman would not be the worse wife for being learned; in which from all that I have observed of Artemesias, I humbly differed from him. That a woman should be sensible and well-informed I allow to be a great advantage, and think that Sir Thomas Overbury, in his rude versification, has very judiciously pointed out that degree of intelligence which is to be desired in a female companion:

> "Give me, next *good*, an *understanding wife*,
> By nature *wise*, not *learned* by much art;
> Some *knowledge* on her side will all my life
> More scope of conversation impart;
> Besides, her unborn virtue fortifie;
> They are most firmly good who best know why." *

* "Life of Johnson," *anno* 1769.

Boswell however managed to procure and has retailed some remarks on second marriages from the Doctor, which is all the success he seems to have obtained.

The publication, in the spring of 1768, of Boswell's "Account of Corsica, with Journal of his Tour," to which reference has already been made, attracted considerable attention. This gave the author the most lively joy; and when General Paoli arrived in London in the autumn of the next year, Boswell's ecstasy was excessive; he found that it was his "duty as well as his pleasure to attend much upon" the hero of Corsican liberty, and accordingly rendered himself superbly ridiculous by thrusting himself on all occasions into the splendour of the General's reflected light. The Journal of Dr. Johnson's conversations even languished, in consequence chiefly of the obsequious court which Boswell delighted to pay to the distinguished foreigner. From the same cause perhaps the Temple correspondence also may have flagged.

Boswell, previously to his marriage, went over to Ireland, attracted, it may be, by the "fair Irlandaise." Some of his doings are chronicled in the *Public Advertiser*, and probably, as suggested by Mr. Croker, with his own hand. The fashionable subscriber to that paper read on the 7th of July, 1769,* that "James Boswell, Esq., having now visited Ireland, he dined with his Grace the Duke of Leinster, at his seat at Carton; he went also, by special invitation, to visit the Lord-Lieutenant at his country-seat at Leixlip, to which he was conducted, in one of his Excellency's coaches, by Lieut.-Colonel Walshe. He dined there, and stayed all night, and next morning came in the coach with his Excellency to the Phœnix Park, and was present at a review of Sir Joseph Yorke's Dragoons. He also dined with the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor. He is now set out on his return to Scotland."

Beside his marriage and his parasitical zeal in attending on Paoli, another event intensely exciting to Boswell was the Shakspeare jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon. In this festival he took part with his wonted bustle and animated vanity.

The *London Magazine* of September, 1769, contains an amusing and characteristic "Letter from James Boswell, Esq., on the Jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon;" also an "Account of

* See Croker's edition of Boswell's "Life of Dr. Johnson."

the Armed Corsican Chief at the Masquerade at Shakspeare's Jubilee, with a fine whole-length portrait of James Boswell, Esq., in the dress of an Armed Corsican Chief, as he appeared at the Jubilee Mask." The "Account," we may assume, was written by the armed Corsican chief himself. The writer says: "One of the most remarkable masks upon the occasion was James Boswell, Esq., in the dress of an armed Corsican chief. He entered the amphitheatre about twelve o'clock; he wore a short dark-coloured coat of coarse cloth, scarlet waistcoat, breeches, and black spatterdashes; his cap or bonnet was of black cloth; on the front of it was embroidered in gold letters, 'Viva la Libertà,' and on one side of it was a handsome blue feather and cockade, so that it had an elegant as well as a warlike appearance. On the breast of his coat was sewed a Moor's head, the crest of Corsica, surrounded with branches of laurel; he had also a cartridge-pouch, into which was stuck a stiletto, and on his left side a pistol was hung upon the belt of his cartridge-pouch. He had a fusee slung across his shoulder, wore no powder in his hair, but had it plaited at its full length, with a knot of blue ribbons at the end of it. He had, by way of staff, a very curious vine, all of one piece, with a bird finely carved upon it, emblematical of the sweet bard of Avon. He wore no mask, saying that it was not proper for a gallant Corsican. So soon as he came into the room, he drew universal attention. The novelty of the Corsican dress, its becoming appearance, and the character of the brave nation, concurred to distinguish the armed Corsican chief. He was first accosted by Mr. Garrick, with whom he had a good deal of conversation. There was an admirable dialogue between Lord Grosvenor, in the character of a Turk, and the Corsican, on the different constitution of the countries so opposite to each other,—Despotism and Liberty; and Captain Thomson, of the navy, in the character of an honest tar, kept it up very well; he expressed a strong inclination to stand by the brave Islanders. Mr. Boswell danced both a minuet and country-dance with a very pretty Irish lady, Mrs. Sheldon, wife to Captain Sheldon of the 38th Foot (Lord Blany); she was dressed in a genteel domino, and before she danced threw off her mask. Mr. Boswell having come to the Jubilee to contribute his share towards what he called a classical institution in honour of Shakspeare, being also desirous of paying compliment to Mr. Garrick, with

whom he has always been on a most agreeable footing, and never unmindful of the cause which he has espoused, he wrote the following verses, which, it is thought, are well suited to the occasion, while, at the same time, they preserved the true Corsican character."

It would be asking too much of any one to peruse these lines; it will suffice to say that they commenced thus:

> "From the rude banks of Golo's rapid flood,
> . . . Behold a Corsican!"

and having affirmed that

> "In man's firm breast concealed its grief should lie,
> Which melts with grace in woman's gentle eye;"

he begs his countrymen to

> "Give to Corsica a noble jubilee;"

and so concludes.

Boswell and his wife were now residing in Scotland, and we do not hear much of him, either in his correspondence with Mr. Temple or as Dr. Johnson's biographer. In a letter to the latter, dated Edinburgh, 1771, he says: "Although I am conscious that my veneration and love for Mr. Johnson have never in the least abated, yet I have deferred for almost a year and a half to write to him." In the spring of 1772, however, he returned to London and its society for a few months; he repeated his visit the following spring, and was proposed as a candidate for the Literary Club, at Dr. Johnson's instance, on April 30th, 1773, and duly elected. "I was left," says he, "at Beauclerk's till the fate of my election should be announced to me. I sat in a state of anxiety, which even the charming conversation of Lady de Beauclerk could not entirely dissipate. In a short time I received the agreeable intelligence that I was chosen. I hastened to the place of meeting, and was introduced to such a society as can seldom be found: Mr. Edmund Burke, whom I then saw for the first time, and whose splendid talents had long made me ardently wish for his acquaintance; Dr. Nugent, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, and the company with whom I had dined (at

Mr. Beauclerk's). Upon my entrance Johnson placed himself behind a chair, on which he leaned as on a desk or pulpit, and with humorous formality gave me a *charge*, pointing out the conduct expected from me as a good member of this Club." *

We have anticipated events in referring here to his marriage; before that happy occurrence took place, several other passages of love were rehearsed, as will be seen in the following letters.

35] EDINBURGH, *8th February*, 1768.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—All is over between Miss Blair and me. I have delayed writing till I could give you some final account. About a fortnight after she went to the country, a report went that she was going to be married to Sir Alexander Gilmour, member of Parliament for the county of Mid-Lothian, a young man about thirty, who has £1600 a year of estate, was formerly an officer in the Guards, and is now one of the clerks of the Board of Green Cloth, £1000 a year —in short, a noble match, though a man of expense, and obliged to lead a London life. After the fair agreement between her and me, which I gave you fully in my last, I had a title to know the truth. I wrote to her seriously, and told her, if she did not write me an answer I should believe the report to be true. After three days I concluded, from her silence, that she was at least engaged. I endeavoured to laugh off my passion, and I got Sir Alexander Gilmour to frank a

* See "Life of Johnson," *anno* 1773. It is said by Mr. Croker, on the authority of Mr. Milman, who examined the records of the Club with special view of ascertaining the frequency of the visits of both Boswell and Dr. Johnson at the Club, that the two only met at the Club some seven or eight times. The last occasion was June 22nd, 1784. Boswell indeed does not appear to have been one of those who regularly attended the evening meetings, even when he was visiting London.

letter to her, which I wrote in a pleasant strain, and amused myself with the whim; still however I was not absolutely certain, as her conduct has been so prudent all along. At last she comes to town; and who comes too but my old rival, the Nabob? I got acquainted with Mr. Fullarton, and he and I joked a good deal about our heiress. Last night he proposed that he and I should go together and pay her a visit for the first time after her return from the country; accordingly we went, and I give you my word, Temple, it was a curious scene. However the Princess behaved exceedingly well, though with a reserve more than ordinary. When we left her we both exclaimed, "Upon my soul, a fine woman!" I began to like the Nabob much; so I said to him, "I do believe, Mr. Fullarton, you and I are in the same situation here; is it possible to be upon honour, and generous, in an affair of this kind?" We agreed it was. Each then declared he was serious in his love for Miss B.; each protested he never before believed the other in earnest. We agreed to deal by one another in a fair and candid manner. I carried him to sup at a lady's, a cousin of mine, where we stayed till half an hour past eleven; we then went to a tavern, and the good old claret was set before us. He told me that he had been most assiduous in attending Miss Blair, but she never gave him the least encouragement, and declared he was convinced she loved me as much as a woman could love a man. With equal honesty I told all that had passed between her and me, and your observation on the wary mother. "What!" said he, "did Temple say so? If he had lived twenty years in the country with them, he could not have said a better thing." I then told him Dempster's humorous saying, that all Miss B.'s connections were in an absolute confederacy to lay hold



JAMES BOSWELL

Engraved by E. FINDEN, *from a sketch by*
GEORGE LANGTON

of every man who has a thousand a year, and how I called their system a *salmon-fishing*. "You have hit it," said he; "we're all kept in play; but I am positive you are the fish, and Sir Alexander is only a mock salmon, to force you to jump more expeditiously at the bait." We sat till two this morning; we gave our words, as men of honour, that we would be honest to each other, so that neither should suffer needlessly; and, to satisfy ourselves of our real situation, we gave our words that we should both ask her this morning, and I should go first. Could there be anything better than this? The Nabob talked to me with the warmth of the Indies, and professed the greatest pleasure on being acquainted with me.

Well, Temple, I went this morning, and she made tea to me alone. I then asked her seriously, if she was to be married to Sir Alexander. She said it was odd to believe everything people said, and why did I put such question? etc. I said that she knew very well that I was much in love with her, and that if I had any chance I would take a good deal of trouble to make myself agreeable to her. She said I need not take the trouble, and I must not be angry, for she thought it best to tell me honestly. "What, then," said I, "have I no chance?" "No," said she. I asked her to say so upon her word and honour. She fairly repeated the words. So I think, Temple, I had enough.

She would not tell me whether she was engaged to the knight: she said she would not satisfy an idle curiosity; but I own I had no doubt of it. What amazed me was, that she and I were as easy and as good friends as ever. I told her, I have great animal spirits, and bear it wonderfully well. But this is really hard: I am thrown upon the wide world again; I don't know what will become of me.

Before dinner the Nabob and I met, and he told me that he went, and in the most serious and submissive manner begged to know if she was engaged. She would give him no satisfaction, and treated him with a degree of coldness that overpowered him quite, poor man!

Such is the history of the lovers of this cruel Princess, who certainly is a lucky woman to have had a sovereign sway over so many admirers. I have endeavoured to make merry on my misfortune.

A Crambo Song on losing my Mistress.

"Although I be an honest laird,
In person rather strong and brawny,
For me the heiress never cared,
For she would have the knight, Sir Sawney.

"And when, with ardent vows, I swore
Loud as Sir Jonathan Trelawny,
The heiress showed me to the door,
And said, she'd have the knight, Sir Sawney.

"She told me, with a scornful look,
I was as ugly as a tawny;
For she a better fish could hook,
The rich and gallant knight, Sir Sawney."

N.B. I can find no more rhymes to Sawney.

Now that all is over, I see many faults in her which I did not see before. Do you not think she has not feeling enough, nor that ingenuous spirit which your friend requires? The Nabob and many other people are still of opinion that she has not made sure of Sir Sawney, and that all this may be *finesse;* but I cannot suspect so young a creature of so much artifice; and whatever may be in it, I am honourably off, and you may wonder at it, but I assure you I am very easy and cheerful. I am however resolved to look out for a good

wife, either here or in England. I intend to be in London in March: my address will be at Mr. Dilly's, bookseller; but I expect to hear from you before I set out, which will not be till the 14th of March. I rejoice to hear that Mrs. Temple is in a good way; my best wishes ever attend you and her.

I am,
Your most affectionate friend,
JAMES BOSWELL.

Feb. 11*th.*—I have allowed my letter to lie by till this day. The heiress is a good Scots lass, but I must have an Englishwoman. My mind is now twice as enlarged as it has been for some months. You cannot say how fine a woman I may marry; perhaps a Howard, or some other of the noblest in the kingdom.

The "Scots lass" being dethroned, the "charming Dutchwoman" of Utrecht is set up in her stead.

36] LONDON, 24*th March*, 1768.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I received, on yesterday, your letter, wanting £15, and this morning I got the enclosed bank-bill. I heartily sympathise with the troubles into which the imprudence of one relation and the bad conduct of another, joined to your own generosity, have brought you; but you know, my valuable friend, we are not here as in a state of felicity.

I received your former letter before I left Scotland, and was quite happy to find you were in such a way of thinking with regard to Miss B. I am indeed glad that I am rid of her. She has now shown, what I always suspected, that she had no other view but just convenience and interest. Do you know, my charming

Dutchwoman and I have renewed our correspondence? and upon my soul, Temple, I must have her. She is so sensible, so accomplished, and knows me so well and likes me so much, that I do not see how I can be unhappy with her. Sir John Pringle is now for it; and this night I write to my father, begging his permission to go over to Utrecht just now. She very properly writes, we should meet without any engagement, and if we like an union for life, good and well; if not, we are still to be friends. What think you of this, Temple?

My book has amazing celebrity: Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Walpole, Mrs. Macaulay, Mr. Garrick, have all written me noble letters about it. There are two Dutch translations going forward, and Zelide translates it into French. Pray tell me how I can send you a copy of the *second edition*, which is already printed.

I am in a great hurry. Address at "Mr. Russell's, Upholsterer's, Half-Moon Street, Piccadilly." I am happy Wyvill and you are again friends. I go to Oxford, to venerate the shades of science, with the illustrious Samuel Johnson.

Most affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

"The charming Dutchwoman" yields now in favour of a healthy, young, and amiable Miss Dick, but only for about ten days.

37] LONDON, *16th April*, 1768.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—I find the fair and lively Zelide has no chance for the vote of the Rector of Mamhead. My father is quite against the scheme, so you need not be afraid. Indeed I should not engage

in matrimonial concerns without your approbation; however, I cannot help thinking both my father and my friend too severe. Zelide may have had faults, but is she always to have them? may not time have altered her for the better, as it has altered me? But you will tell me that I am not so greatly altered, as I have still many unruly passions. To confess to you at once, Temple, I have, since my last coming to town, been as wild as ever.*

I have seen Claxton, but have not yet had an evening with him. Wyvill is in town: he was with me this forenoon. Why have you not answered his kind letter? I insist on your doing it immediately.

I sent you my book more than a week ago, to the London Inn at Exeter: I hope you have received it. Shall we not meet? Have you positively no bed in your parsonage for me? But may I not come and sit up a night with you, if Mrs. Temple will allow it? I would ask you to come to London, but I wish to see you at your own table with your wife. My dear friend, how do past years return to my mind! Forgive my follies; love me; contrive how we shall meet, and write to me soon. Ever most sincerely yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—I knew you are determined to have me married. What would you think of the fine, healthy, young, amiable Miss Dick, with whom you dined so agreeably? Would not the worthy Knight call out a homily? She wants only a good fortune.

* The evidence which he proceeds to give his friend of this fact, it is unnecessary to offer here: it shows that the prudence and self-control he promised to display, so soon as his book was out, were not contemporaneous with that event.

38] LONDON, *26th April*, 1768.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your moral lecture came to me yesterday in very good time, while I lay suffering severely for immorality. If there is any firmness at all in me, be assured that I shall never again behave in a manner so unworthy the friend of Paoli. My warm imagination looks forward with great complacency on the sobriety, the healthfulness, and the worth of my future life.

But I have not yet given up with Zelide. Just after I wrote you last, I received a letter from her, full of good sense and of tenderness. "My dear friend," she says, "it is prejudice that has kept you so much at a distance from me; if we meet, I am sure that prejudice will be removed." The letter is in English; I have sent it to my father, and have earnestly begged his permission to go and see her. I promised, upon honour, not to engage myself, but only to bring a faithful report, and let him decide. Be patient, Temple; read the enclosed letters, and return them to me. Both my father and you know Zelide only from me; may I not have taken a prejudice, considering the melancholy of my mind, while I was at Utrecht? How do we know but she is an inestimable prize? Surely it is worth while to go to Holland to see a fair conclusion, one way or other, of what has hovered in my mind for years. I have written to her, and told her all my perplexity; I have put in the plainest light what conduct I absolutely require of her, and what my father will require. I have bid her be my wife at present, and comfort me with a letter, in which she shall show at once her wisdom, her spirit, and her regard for me. You shall see it. I tell you, man, she knows me and values me as you do. After reading the enclosed letters I am sure you will be better disposed towards

my charming Zelide. I am very ill; my surgeon, Mr. Forbes, of the Horse-Guards, says my distemper is one of the worst he has ever seen. I wish I may be able to go to Holland at all. Old General Oglethorpe, who has come to see me, and is with me often, just on account of my book, bids me not marry till I have first put the Corsicans in a proper situation. You may make a fortune in the doing of it, said he; or, if you do not, you will have acquired such a character as will entitle you to any fortune.

You cannot imagine how happy I am at your approbation of my book. Look back, my dearest friend, at the days when we walked together on Arthur's Seat. Ah! do you rank your Boswell with Molesworth and Stanyan? You must think awhile, to enjoy the idea!

It is uncertain when I shall get to you, but I long for it. In the meantime pray refresh me with letters. My best wishes to Mrs. Temple.

Ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

In one of Boswell's earlier letters, he declared that he would fight against the demon of niggardliness. In the following epistle he declares that he "is really the great man now," and forthwith shows how he has arrived at this elevation, which seems to have been by means of his admirable dinners, good claret, setting up a chariot, and generally by enjoying the fruits of his labour, and "appearing like the friend of Paoli." The detail in the "Life of Johnson" is rather scanty about this period; dissipation, the History of Corsica, wife-hunting, a little gambling, and some practice in the law at Edinburgh, interfered perhaps at this time with his pursuit of Dr. Johnson.

39] LONDON, *14th May*, 1768.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—When one is confined, as I am, he has a great avidity for the letters of a friend, so

that I was uneasy at not hearing again from you so soon as I expected; but I received a kind letter yesterday, which set me to rights. I lost no time in executing your commissions. Poor Thomas was ill, and I was obliged to leave him in Scotland; but I sent Anthony, my present servant, last night, both to Mrs. Alders and to Mr. Dilly's. The books are to be shipped as soon as possible. So you are pleased with the writings of Zelide! Ah, my friend! had you but seen the tender and affectionate letter which she wrote to me, and which I transmitted to my father! And can you still oppose my union with her? Yes, you can; and, my dearest friend, you are much in the right. I told you what sort of letter I last wrote to her; it was candid, fair, and conscientious. I told her of many difficulties: I told her my fears from her levity and infidel notions, at the same time admiring her, and hoping she was altered for the better. How did she answer? Read her letter. Could any actress at any of the theatres attack me with a keener—what is the word? not fury, something softer. The lightning that flashes with so much brilliance may scorch, and does not her *esprit* do so? Is she not a termagant, or at least will she not be one by the time she is forty? and she is near thirty now. Indeed, Temple, thou reasonest well. You may believe I was perfectly brought over to your opinion by this acid epistle. I was then afraid that my father, out of his great indulgence, might have consented to my going to Utrecht; but I send you his answer, which is admirable, if you make allowance for his imagination that I am not dutiful to him. I have written to him:—"I will take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds. How happy am I at having a friend at home of such wisdom and firmness. I was eager for the Guards, I was eager for

Mademoiselle; but you have happily restrained me from both. Since then, I have experienced your superior judgment in the two important articles of a profession and the choice of a wife. I shall henceforth do nothing without your advice." Worthy man! this will be a solace to him upon his Circuit. As for Zelide, I have written to her that we are agreed. My pride (say I) and your vanity would never agree: it would be like the scene in our burlesque comedy, "The Rehearsal":—"I am the bold thunder," cries one; "The quick lightning I," cries another, "*et voilà notre ménage.*" But she and I will always be good correspondents.

I forget what I wrote you about somebody having talked of my "placing" the Corsicans, etc. Who was it? and how is he wrong? This is to try if I can balance your "humbler."

I am really the *great man* now. I have had David Hume, in the forenoon, and Mr. Johnson, in the afternoon, of the same day, visiting me. Sir John Pringle, Dr. Franklin, and some more company, dined with me to-day; and Mr. Johnson and General Oglethorpe one day, Mr. Garrick alone another, and David Hume and some more *literati* another, dine with me next week. I give admirable dinners and good claret; and the moment I go abroad again, which will be in a day or two, I set up my chariot. This is enjoying the fruit of my labours, and appearing like the friend of Paoli. By the bye, the Earl of Pembroke and Captain Meadows are just setting out for Corsica, and I have the honour of introducing them by a letter to the General. David Hume came on purpose, the other day, to tell me that the Duke of Bedford was very fond of my book, and had recommended it to the Duchess. David is really amiable:

I always regret to him his unlucky principles, and he smiles at my faith; but I have a hope which he has not, or pretends not to have. So who has the best of it, my reverend friend? David is going to give us two more volumes of History, down to George II. I wish he may not mire himself in the Brunswick sands. Pactolus is there. Dr. Robertson is come up laden with his "Charles V.,"—three large quartos: he has been offered three thousand guineas for it. To what a price has literature arisen! I am now almost well; and, upon my honour, I shall be moral for the future. When I hear from you again, I will fix when I am to be with you, and happy shall I be, I do assure you, though I cannot stay above a night or two. Wyvill is gone home. Claxton asked me to dine with him lately, but I could not go. Pray send me a short introduction to Mr. Gray.* You are wrong in being positive against Miss Dick, but of this when we meet. Return me the enclosed letters. Present my best compliments to Mrs. Temple.

Ever yours, my dearest friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

The letter of the 24th August now introduces to Mr. Temple another lady, as supreme over all the rest as it is possible for a Boswell's imagination to conceive; besides which, she was possessed of this world's goods. In fact, "every flower is united, and not a thorn to be found."

* Probably the desire for an introduction in this case was not mutual. It has been already seen what Gray and Walpole said to each other in respect of the "Account of Corsica"; and one of the reminiscences of Gray, by the Rev. N. Nicholls, is as follows: "When Boswell published his 'Account of Corsica,' I found Mr. Gray reading it. 'With this,' he said, 'I am much pleased, because I see the author is too foolish to have invented it.'" (Edition by Mitford. Pickering. 1843.)

40] AUCHINLECK, *24th August*, 1768.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—You have good reason to accuse me of neglect in being silent so long. My apology, I fear, is not sufficient; for although I was a good deal taken up with the business of the Summer Session, had I not allowed myself to employ a great deal of time in gaming, I need not have put off from day to day writing to my best friend. Some years ago I had the rage of gaming, and I lost more money than I was able to pay. Mr. Sheridan advanced me as much as cleared me, but took a promise from me that I should not play at all for three years. When I was abroad he freed me from my promise, but restricted me not to lose above three guineas at a sitting. I thought my passion for gaming had been quite gone; but since I came last to Scotland I began again to try a game of chance, and I found the fever still lurking in my veins, and it seized me for awhile, and I know not how much harm it might have done me had it continued; but after having recovered myself so as to have lost about fourteen guineas, I have made a resolution never to play at a game of chance, and never at Whist but for a trifle, to make up a party.

My dear Temple, will you be so good as to pardon this last neglect, from which I am sure I suffer more than you do; and let us henceforth keep up a close correspondence, and so live together as much as possible at a distance. Your misfortune by the bankruptcy of Mr. Fenwick Stow really afflicted me; you have a noble spirit, not to be cast down by so many misfortunes. Are you in any immediate want of money? If you are, I will send you all that I can command. Do you remember how generous you was to me when I wanted to purchase a commission in the Guards? I hope Mrs. Temple is in a good way; let me know

particularly about her. I am exceedingly lucky in having escaped the insensible Miss B. and the furious Zelide, for I have now seen the finest creature that ever was formed, *la belle Irlandaise.** Figure to yourself, Temple, a young lady just sixteen, formed like a Grecian nymph, with the sweetest countenance, full of sensibility, accomplished, with a Dublin education, always half the year in the north of Ireland, her father a counsellor-at-law, with an estate of £1000 a year, and above £10,000 in ready money; her mother a sensible, well-bred woman; she the darling of her parents, and no other child but her sister. She is cousin to some cousins of mine in this county. I was at their house while she and her father and mother and aunt were over upon a visit just last week. The counsellor is as worthy a gentleman as ever I saw. Your friend was a favourite with all of them. From morning to night I admired the charming Mary Anne. Upon my honour, I never was so much in love; I never was before in a situation to which there was not some objection, but *here every flower is united*, and not a thorn to be found. But how shall I manage it? they were in a hurry, and are gone home to Ireland. They were sorry they could not come to see Auchinleck, of which they had heard a great deal. Mary Anne wished much to be in the grotto. It is a pity they did not come; this princely seat would have had some effect. I received the kindest invitation to come and see them in Ireland, and I promised to be there in

* "*La belle Irlandaise*" is here called Mary Anne. The name of the lady who ultimately became Mrs. Boswell was Margaret. She belonged to the family of the Montgomeries of Lainshawe. Mrs. Boswell certainly had Irish connections; but, although she answers in some respects to the description here given of *la belle Irlandaise*, the two cannot safely be identified.

March. In the meantime both the father and the aunt write to me. What a fortunate fellow am I! what a variety of adventures in all countries! I was allowed to walk a great deal with Miss——; I repeated my fervent passion to her again and again; she was pleased, and I could swear that her little heart beat. I carved the first letter of her name on a tree; I cut off a lock of her hair, *male pertinax*. She promised not to forget me, nor to marry a lord before March. Her aunt said to me, "Mr. Boswell, I tell you seriously there will be no fear of this succeeding but from your own inconstancy; stay till March." All the Scotch cousins too think I may be the happy man. Ah, my friend, I am now as I ought to be; no reserved, prudent conduct, as with Miss B. No! all youthful, warm, natural; in short, all genuine love. Pray tell me what you think. I have great confidence in your judgment. I mean not to ask what you think of my angelic girl; I am fixed beyond a possibility of doubt as to her. Believe me, she is like a very part of my soul. But will not the fond parents insist on having quality for their daughter, who is to have so large a fortune? or do you think that the Baron of Auchinleck is great enough? Both father, mother, and aunt assured me of my high character in Ireland, where my book is printed the third edition: that is no bad circumstance. I shall see in what style the counsellor writes, and shall send some elegant presents to my lovely mistress.

This is the most agreeable passion I ever felt; sixteen, innocence, and gaiety, make me quite a Sicilian swain. Before I left London I made a vow in St. Paul's Church, that I would not allow myself in licentious connections of any kind for six months. I am hitherto firm to my vow, and already feel myself a superior being. I have given up my criminal inter-

course with Mrs. ——; in short, Maria has me without any rival. I do hope the period of my perfect felicity, as far as this state can afford, is now in view.

The affairs of the brave Corsicans interest me exceedingly. Is it not shocking in France to send a great armament against such a noble little people? I have had four letters from the General this summer; he and his countrymen are resolved to stand to the last. I have hopes that our Government will interfere. In the meantime, by a private subscription in Scotland, I am sending this week £700 worth of ordnance. The Carron Company has furnished me them very cheap; there are two 32-pounders, four 24's, four 18's, and twenty 9-pounders, with one hundred and fifty ball to each. It is really a tolerable train of artillery.

My brother David was so lucky as, just at the conclusion of his apprenticeship, to be assumed partner in a house at Valencia, in Spain. Honorius Dalliol, a Frenchman, Mr. Charles Herries, a Scotchman, and David, are the partners. He has been there some months; he is delighted with the country, and writes me admirable letters; he is still agitated with generous ideas of perfection, as you and I used to be. He is miserable if he does not make that figure in company which he wishes to do; and he begs that I would inform him, from you, how it is that you can sit quite serene, placid, and happy, in a company where perhaps you have hardly opened your mouth. Pray humour him thus far.

And now, my dear friend, I trust that you will forgive my long silence, and will be assured that I ever am, with the warmest regard,

Your affectionate and faithful

JAMES BOSWELL.

The conflict in Boswell's mind between his various loves is here very amusingly told. The flame for Miss Blair and his passion for "sweet Mary Anne" are in ridiculous contrast, but the latter seems to have the advantage; at least he says eventually that he remains quite constant to her. Still he does not quite know what to do, though sure that he is himself the "candid, generous Boswell."

As might be expected, Boswell's attempts to live like the friend of Paoli, setting up chariots, etc., ends by his being "a good deal in debt." He also falls into dissipation again, and has various other difficulties to encounter, the result of his usual want of self-control.

41] EDINBURGH, *9th December*, 1768.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I delay not a post to tell you that I have received your letter of the 27th November, and that I sincerely sympathise with the gloomy feelings which at present seem to distress you. Your long silence really made me uneasy. I did not know what to think, and I was just going to have written to Mrs. Temple, or to Lord Lisburne, to inquire if my best friend was alive. I thank God I have you still; for indeed, my dear Temple, I cannot be without you.

I trust that before this reaches you the clouds will be dispelled. Believe me, your imagination has suggested false terrors. Read Epictetus; read Johnson. Let a manly and firm philosophy brace your mind, and you will be convinced that, although you deserve a better situation, you have no reason to be dejected. After all your misfortunes, I believe you have £200 of your own, which, with Mrs. Temple's £1,300, is no inconsiderable fund. Your living is, I believe, £80 a year, which, with what you have clear after paying your father's annuity, may enable you to live very comfortably. Be not too anxious on account of your chil-

dren; educate them with good principles and active habits, and they will make their way through life. I wish you joy of your son, and I most heartily accept the office of being its godfather. I give you my solemn promise that I shall be in earnest to do my duty; and, if my best friend shall leave the world before me, it may be a comfort to him to think that I am left some time longer to take care of his children. If taking a journey to Devonshire could be of any essential service to you, I should willingly come; but in this case a proxy will do.

Mr. Hume is not to go to Paris: he is busy with the continuation of his History. You admire our Scottish authors too much; but you know, my worthy friend, we differ just enough to enliven us, and afford some exercise of our talents.

I cannot approve of your wishing to leave your family: it was a sudden wish while your mind was unhinged. Do not allow yourself to suppose that Lord L. will do nothing more for you: he is your relation; keep well with him, and things may come about. Let me beseech you, Temple, not to fix your desires on external greatness. Recollect how you and I flattered ourselves that we were to be the greatest men of our time.

> "Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum
> Semper urgendo."

Do you know that in reality your uneasiness is owing to your allowing yourself to think too much of those who have superior degrees of the favours of fortune. Pardon me, my friend, if I write thus; I am sure I mean it well. I should like much to have you settled in the English chapel here, but I believe the income is less than at your present residence. I shall, however, consider of it, and inquire as to particulars, and when there will be

an opening. Keep up your spirits, and pray let me know exactly the state of your affairs. Be assured that my friendship for you is unchangeable.

And now as to myself. What think you, my friend? Miss Blair is Miss Blair still! Her marriage with the Knight is not to be. I understand that when terms came to be considered, neither answered the expectations which they had formed of each other's circumstances, and so the match was broken off. After the departure of my "belle Irlandaise," I was two or three times at Adamtown, and, upon my word, the old flame was kindled. The wary mother, as you called her, told me that it was my own fault that her daughter was not long ago my wife; but that after the young lady had shown me very particular marks of regard, corresponded with me, etc., I had made such a joke of *my love for the heiress* in every company,* that she was piqued, and did not believe that I had any serious intentions; that in the meantime the Knight offered, and what could she do? Temple, to a man again in love, this was engaging. I walked whole hours with the Princess; I kneeled; I became truly amorous, but she told me that "really she had a very great regard for me, but did not like me so as to marry me." You never saw such a coldness; yet the Nabob told me, upon his honour and salvation, that he had it from one who had it from Miss B.'s own mouth last year, that she was truly in love with me, and reckoned upon having me for her husband. My relapse into this fever lasted some weeks. I wrote to her, as usual, the most passionate letters. I said, "I shall not again have the galling reflection that my misery is owing to my own fault." Only think of this, Temple! She might have had me, but, luckily for me, she still affected

* A heavy charge against Mr. Boswell, which nevertheless, as has been seen, was probably too true.

the same coldness, and not a line would she write. Then came a kind letter from my amiable aunt Boyd in Ireland, and all the charms of sweet Mary Anne revived. Since that time I have been quite constant to her, and as indifferent towards Kate as if I never had thought of her. She is still in the country. Should I write to her, and tell her I am cured, as she wished? or is there more dignity in just letting the affair sleep? After her behaviour, do I, the candid, generous Boswell, owe her anything? Am I anyhow bound by passionate exclamations to which she did not even answer? Write to me, my dear friend. She will be here soon; I am quite easy with her. What should I do? By all that's enchanting I go to Ireland in March. What should I say to Kate? You see I am still the old man: I have still need of your advice: write me without delay. I shall soon give you a more general epistle.

Adieu, my dearest friend! My kind compliments to Mrs. Temple.

Ever yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—I am just now a good deal in debt. If you want any credit from me, let me know some weeks before. Excuse this. Whatever I can do, you may always depend on.

Postscript.

MY DEAR TEMPLE.—You are by this time well acquainted with my present situation; many a different one have you known me in. You must comfort me, for by the time I can have your answer my spirits will be very low. My present misfortune is occasioned by drinking. Since my return to Scotland I have fallen a great deal too much into that habit, which still prevails in Scotland. Perhaps the coldness of the Scots requires

it, but my fiery blood is turned to madness by it. This will be a warning to me, and from henceforth I shall be a perfect man; at least I hope so. Adieu, my friend! let us correspond once a fortnight. Write me fully. Tell me, sincerely, am I right to insist that my dear little woman shall stay? She was married very young, but she has three children: I hate to think of it. No matter; she is like a girl of eighteen; she has the finest black hair. Is it not right I should have a favourite to keep me happy? but alas! I love her so much that I am in a kind of fever. *This is unworthy of Paoli's friend.* Lord Eglinton once observed, very justly, that "a man may be in love with an Italian woman of gallantry, because, by the custom of the country, she does not think she is doing wrong, so may be called virtuous;" but I cannot apply it to my angel. *Adieu, encore.*

The following letters are from the married Boswell, the question of selecting a wife having been at last solved, as has been mentioned at the beginning of the Chapter, in favour of Miss Montgomerie. We cannot help recollecting a sage reflection offered, in the "Life of Johnson," by Boswell upon this subject: "In a man whom religious education has secured from licentious indulgence, the passion of love, when once it has seized him, is exceedingly strong, being unimpaired by dissipation, and totally concentrated in one object."

The "man" here alluded to does not answer the description of Boswell; but what was the effect of matrimony upon him will appear in the subsequent pages.

42] EDINBURGH, *7th May*, 1770.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter, dated April 26th, has given me both pleasure and pain: pleasure to hear from you; and pain to think, or at least doubt, that you have not received a long letter, which I wrote to you the 3rd of April, containing a full account of Mr.

Hume's opinion as to the study of modern history, and also, as I flattered myself, a satisfactory answer to your strange scheme of changing your profession. My letter was directed to Lord Lisburne, Mamhead, near Chudleigh, Devon. I would fain hope that my letter has before now come to your hands; but lest it should not, I now sit down to recollect, as well as I can, what Mr. Hume said as to the study of modern history. He seemed to be of opinion that no fixed, exact system need be observed. You must, he said, "read the best modern history. I would begin with England, and (here he smiled) read Mrs. Macaulay. (You may guess what History of England he really thinks the best.) You may then read the history of France. I am told the new history by Velly and Villaret is the best, better than Père Dariée." He then said I might read the histories of the Low Countries, by Bentivoglio, and those of the other parts of Europe in what order I chose, as Machiavel, Father Paul, Guicciardini, etc. I would fain hope my letter has reached you; if it has not, you have here the substance of what Mr. Hume said. I told you a great deal more of him, which I shall tell you on being assured my letter has miscarried.

I will not now repeat what I said against your changing your profession: that may keep cold. I shall do it also, when I hear that my letter has not arrived. It really hurts me much, my worthy friend, to see the *nemo quam sibi sortem seu ratio dederit, seu sors objecerit, illa contentus vivat*, so strongly exemplified in you. Well do I know that I have the seeds of the same discontent, but I strive to bury them; do you the same. I am sure I am right, but of this more hereafter. I rejoice to hear that your brother has been so lucky. I shall be disappointed if I do not see you here this summer or autumn; but your objections till July is over are, I

confess, unanswerable. I believe August will be the same sort of season in my family. My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and kind wishes for my godson. Pray write as soon as you receive this.

I am, my dear Temple, ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

43] EDINBURGH, 19*th June*, 1770.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—A long letter which I lately wrote to you has, I hope, come safe to hand. I told you in it that the Rev. Mr. Henry was soon to publish the preface to his History as a prospectus or plan of the work. I got it yesterday, and now send it to you, as you are at present so much in the historical humour, and will relish anything of that kind as much as a fine lady a new fashion in dress. I shall be glad to know what you think of Mr. Henry's plan; it is certainly very laborious, and the work promises to be very substantial. The first advantage, which I have marked on page 5, really puts history in a new light. Do you know any good definition of history? The idea which I have been accustomed to entertain of it is, an account of the political and military transactions of a nation or nations, containing the characters of the principal persons who have contributed to the several operations, interspersed with various reflections. My meaning is clumsily expressed, but you see it. Mr. Henry argues strongly for his extensive plan; but will it not be too much like the "Dictionary of Arts and Sciences" in an historical form? Mr. Hume, when I spoke to him of it, before I saw the plan, seemed to think it would be much of the nature of a book published a few years ago, Anderson's "History of Commerce." The language of this history will not, as far as I think, be so flowing and elegant as that

of some writers to whom our taste is habituated; but it seems to be distinct, and sufficiently expressive. I throw out these hasty observations to you, as my intimate friend. I am to consider the plan at leisure, and give Mr. Henry my opinion. After all it may be a valuable work, and, if well executed, not only may the entire book find a place in libraries, but each branch may be separately published for the use of different classes of readers. I met him to-day, and told him I was to send him one of his plans.

My father is come to town, and never looked better in his life. Honest man! he really is, I believe, very fond of me; and we are at present on very good terms. I behave with prudence towards the person who has occasioned so much uneasiness. I do not as yet see any appearances of her multiplying. My wife joins me in best compliments to you and Mrs. Temple. My love to my little godson.

Your sincerely affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

44] EDINBURGH, *1st September*, 1770.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—After about eight-and-forty hours' illness and real danger, my wife was, on Tuesday last, safely delivered of a son; but the poor child had suffered so much that he did not live above two hours. Thank God, my wife is in a very good way. I received yours from Gainslaw this afternoon. I am glad you are so near me: you may imagine my feelings. Pray write to me: I have much need of your comfort. If you can, stay with me ten days; come immediately, if you can only give me a day or two. I would wish my wife were able to see you.

Most sincerely and affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

45] EDINBURGH, *6th September*, 1770.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Yours of the 4th instant came to my hands yesterday. The consolation of hearing from you, and the prospect of seeing you soon, do me more good than your philosophical considerations on the death of my child. I grant you that there is no *reason* for our having an affection for an infant, which, as it is not properly a rational being, can have no qualities to engage us; yet nature has given us such an instinctive fondness, that being deprived of an infant gives us real distress. I have experienced this, and there is no arguing against it. It may be accounted for, even reasonably, to a certain degree, because every parent annexes to a child a number of most agreeable hopes; and therefore when he is bereft of his child he is deprived of all those hopes. This, to a man of a warm imagination, is no small loss. I was this forenoon paying a visit to John Dalrymple. He told me that Fergusson (Civil Society) used to maintain, that till a child was four years old it was no better than a cabbage. However, Fergusson married and had a child, which died soon after it was born: the firm philosopher was changed into the parent, and he was in very great grief, —greater, said Dalrymple, than he would perhaps have been had his child died at the age of one-and-twenty, as his idea of what the child might have been was higher than in all probability the reality would have been. John Dalrymple is a very knowing, lively companion; you shall have him with us at my house. He tells him there is a "History of the Barbarous Conquest of Mexico, written by one of the Princes of India who lived at the time. It is an authentic book, and is translated into French. He says he cannot undertake to read it himself, but he is very desirous to know what is in it. I have undertaken to read it, and

I shall do it with great pleasure. If the Indian Prince writes of the horrible transactions of the Spaniards in his country, as I imagine he must do, his History will be very striking. It will be like Michael Angelo's picture of the Day of Judgment. Mr. Hume is just now at Sir Gilbert Elliot's country-seat; he will be here again in ten days. My wife recovers as well as I could possibly expect.

Send your portmanteau on Monday, directed for me, at my house in Chessel's Buildings, Canongate, and ride you over whenever you please. Give me all the time you can. My wife will be in her drawing-room next week, if it pleases God to continue to favour her. My dear friend, how happy will it make me to have you under my roof, and enjoy with you some invaluable hours of elegant friendship and classical sociality! Let me hear from you frequently.

Your affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

Our two correspondents therefore had at last the opportunity of enjoying "some invaluable hours of elegant friendship and classical sociality;" perhaps somewhat the less social and the more elegant in that Mr. Temple seems to have been, unlike Mr. Boswell, given to great temperance.

The subject of Boswell's wife is, in the next letter, touched upon in a very characteristic fashion.

46] EDINBURGH, *6th October*, 1770.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—You have reason to blame me for not answering your last kind letter ere now. The truth is, my uncle, Commissioner Cochrane, has been very ill; he lives about six miles out of town, and I have been frequently with him: he is better, and, I hope, quite out of danger.

I rejoice that you got so well to Gainslaw. I was afraid you might find the journey very fatiguing, but you water-drinkers are Herculean fellows. I believe it would be better for me, were I to adopt your system; but this only *en passant*; it is a bill which would meet with a good deal of opposition in my lower house.

How agreeable is it to me to find that my old and most intimate friend was so happy in my house! We must really contrive it so as to pass a good part of our time together. I never will rest till you have a Living in the north; I hope, in Northumberland or Cumberland.

You cannot say too much to me of my wife. How dare you quote to me *sua si bona norint!* I am fully sensible of my happiness in being married to so excellent a woman, so sensible a mistress of a family, so agreeable a companion, so affectionate and peculiarly proper helpmate for me. I own I am not so much on my guard against fits of passion or gloom as I ought to be, but that is really owing to her great goodness. There is something childish in it, I confess: I ought not to indulge in such fits; it is like a child that lets itself fall purposely, to have the pleasure of being tenderly raised up again by those who are fond of it. I shall endeavour to be better. Upon the whole, I do believe I make her very happy. God bless and preserve her!

Honest Johnston is very ill, and desires to be kindly remembered to you; he is very often with me; I always find him a worthy, sensible friend. My wife and I intend to set out on Monday for Ayrshire: we shall be part of our time with her sisters, and part at Auchinleck. You may just direct for me at Edinburgh; the post-office people forward my letters to me wher-

ever I am. I wish to know how you are settling your affairs. Write me particularly, and you shall have my father's advice. I hope Mrs. Temple and your young family continue well. My wife joins me in best compliments.

Your most affectionate friend,
JAMES BOSWELL.

The following fragment of a letter is without a date, but was evidently written about August, 1772.

* * * * * *

My brother John took a ride this summer as far as the Land's End; he was at *Chudleigh*, no less. But so strange a man is he, that, upon hearing that it was a cross-road to Mamhead, or some such small difficulty, he did not pay you a visit, though he knew that I wished it much, and I believe wished it himself; for be has a good deal of kindness under that curious appearance of his. He disagreed with my father's lady, and so is gone back to Newcastle with Dr. Wilson, physician there. David is a fine fellow, but I am afraid will become so much a foreigner that we shall find it difficult to get him home. In the late multitude of bankruptcies, a gentleman in London, with whom my father was anxious to have David admitted a partner, failed; and as it is so uncertain who are in good circumstances, who in bad, my father is, at present, very well satisfied that David should continue in Spain.

I had some hopes that Mr. Samuel Johnson would have visited Scotland, and made a tour through part of the Highlands and isles with me this autumn, but I had a letter from him, some posts ago, telling me

that he could not come this year; but he says, "I am very sincere in my intention to pay the visit and take the ramble." I hope you hear frequently from worthy Claxton; when I was last in London, I formed a much higher opinion of him than formerly: I hope we "three shall meet again" comfortably. I write by this post to Lord Lisburne to thank him for his polite letter. Worthy Johnston has just left me (now the 24th). My wife and he join me in best compliments to you and Mrs. Temple. I ever am, my dear Temple, with unalterable affection and regard, yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

It has been observed, that Boswell's marriage and residence in Edinburgh caused a suspension of his industry, even in the pursuit of his correspondence with Dr. Johnson.* However in 1772, when he reappeared in London, he recommenced collecting material for the *magnum opus*, and the next year had the inexpressible joy of accompanying his revered friend on his visit to the Hebrides, the Journal of which, incorporated by Mr. Croker into the Biography, forms perhaps one of its most interesting portions.

* See "Life of Johnson," *anno* 1770 (chap. xxiv., Croker's edit.).

CHAPTER VII

1774–1775

Letter to Mrs. Temple—Advice to her as a wife—Boswell's journey to London—Superstition and feudalism—Lord Lisburne—Inconvenience to a chaplain in breakfasting—Success in making acquaintance—The American question—Talking from books—Langton Garrick—Temple's essay on the clergy—Boswell's hope of place—Lord Pembroke—A speculation on the patriarchs—Boswell's moral fences—Temple's character of Gray adopted by Mason—London Magazine—Boswell in election case—Dinners and pleasures in town—Richard Owen Cambridge—Hermes Harris.

At this period we find Boswell differing from his father as to the wisdom of coming to London; but the son has his way, and, fortunately for the readers of the "Life of Johnson," takes up his abode in the Metropolis. He now rushes about in violent bustle: he himself confesses that his exuberant spirits prevent his *listening;* but he sees a variety of men and manners, and is happy. Still one cannot help wishing, for some reasons, and especially on his own account, that Mrs. Boswell had accompanied him on this visit.

The reader will find Boswell presently breaking out into a generous rapture, because a chance extract from one of Temple's letters to him, which he communicated anonymously to the *London Magazine*, has been used by Mason in his "Life of Gray." It was subsequently also borrowed by Dr. Johnson. The passage in question appeared in Vol. 41 of the Magazine (March, 1772), and the editor (or Boswell) introduces the criticism as written "by a gentleman of Cambridge, of much learning, who knew him (Gray) well." Mr. Mason

thus prefaces its insertion in the Memoirs *: "I might," says he, "here lay down my pen; yet if any reader should still want his character, I will give him one which was published very soon after Mr. Gray's decease. It appears to be well written; and *as it came from an anonymous pen*, I choose the rather to insert it, as it will on that account be less suspected of partiality." Although Dr. Johnson thought Temple's remarks worthy of a place in his biography, yet he does not admit them in a very cordial manner. Having quoted them, he says, "His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Mason has done, from a letter written to my friend Mr. Boswell by the Rev. Mr. Temple, rector of St. Gluvias, in Cornwall; I am as willing as his warmest well-wisher to believe it true." Thus Mr. Temple's casual criticism, unknown to himself, was presented to the public in two authentic works. It runs thus: "Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially, but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil; had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy, and was a great antiquarian; criticism, metaphysics, moral politics, made a principal part of his study; voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements; and he had a fine taste in painting fruits, architecture, and gilding. With such a fund of knowledge his conversation must have been equally instructing and entertaining; but he was also a good man, a man of virtue and humanity. There is no character without some speck, some imperfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science. He also had in some degree that weakness which disgusted Voltaire so much in Mr. Congreve; though he seemed to value others chiefly according to the progress they had made in knowledge, yet he could not bear to be considered himself merely a man of letters; and, though without birth or fortune or station, his desire was to be looked upon as an honest independent gentleman, who read for amusement. Perhaps it may be said, what signifies so much knowledge when it



* Edit. 1775, p. 401. In the superb edition by Mr. Mathias (1814) Mr. Temple's name is affixed to this passage.

produced so little? Is it worth taking so much pains to leave no memorial but a few Poems? But let it be considered that Mr. Gray was to others at least pleasantly employed; to himself certainly beneficially. His time passed agreeably; he was every day making some new acquaintance in science; his mind was enlarged, his heart softened, his virtue strengthened; the world and mankind were shown to him without a mask, and he was taught to consider everything as trifling and unworthy of the attention of a wise man, except the pursuit of knowledge and practice of virtue in that state wherein God hath placed us."

The following letter is to Mrs. Temple. Boswell seems here to imitate, as he occasionally does also elsewhere, the Johnsonian tone and style of address.

47] EDINBURGH, 31*st December*, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,—I return you my thanks for your kind letter, and be assured that it gives me sincere comfort and satisfaction to think that my dearest friend has such a wife as you. I need not tell you how anxiously I wish for his happiness; and it is no small circumstance that he has a partner for life who loves him as much as you do, and who has qualities which I should mention fully did I not fear to be suspected of paying compliments, while I am only expressing the feelings of my heart.

I heartily wish you joy of another son, and am much obliged to you for your good wishes that I may have one soon. I shall please myself with the hopes of that acquisition; and if I am not so happy, I shall endeavour to be content. You never saw two finer children than my two little daughters.

My wife joins me in best compliments to you, though you did not favour us with your company when Mr. Temple was last in Scotland. I hope to have the pleasure of being a few days with you at

Mamhead next spring. Take good care of my old and most intimate friend, and be always good-humoured when he complains.

I am, dear Madam,

Your affectionate humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL.

48] EDINBURGH, *3rd January*, 1775.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—The enclosed to Mrs. Temple should have been sent last night, but was omitted in the hurry I was in to catch the post.

I was lately troubled a good deal, as formerly, about human liberty and God's prescience.* I had recourse to the great Montesquieu, in one of his '*Lettres Persanes*,' and had the subject made clear to me, as I once had by that letter when I was at Mamhead, I forget whether by chance or by your directing me to it. Are you ever disturbed with abstract doubts?

Adieu! ever yours,

J. B.

49] GRANTHAM, *18th March*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your letter of the 1st February was really a feast to me. You and I cannot flatter each other. We may then freely communicate our agreeable sentiments. You have read Mr. Johnson's "Journey" with judgment and taste, and your remarks are all well said,—some of them just, even in my opinion, and none but what most people will approve. The *second sight* and the *tacksmen* are to *me*

* This question is discussed in the "Life of Johnson" (April 15, 1778) by the Doctor and Boswell and Dr. Mayo. Johnson sums it up thus: "All theory is against the freedom of the will,—all experience for it."

valuable. The first pleases my superstition, which you know is not small, and being not of the gloomy, but the grand species, is an enjoyment; and I go further than Mr. Johnson, for the facts which I heard convinced me. The latter pleases my old feudal spirit. You are clearly right in your criticism on his using the word *elegance*, when he speaks of Hebridian entertainment. I must tell him too that when he says Scotch is seldom heard in splendid companies, he gives a word too great, for I hardly ever saw a splendid company at Edinburgh. I am pleased with Lord Lisburne, that he should fancy my remarks: I have them written out, and you shall see them. I never had a letter from his Lordship but one, long ago, which I answered. I shall pay my respects to him at the Admiralty.

I am now so far on my way to London in the fly. It is Saturday night, and we repose here all Sunday. I have an acquaintance in Grantham, the Rev. Mr. Palmer, who was chaplain to the late Speaker: he is a worthy, learned, social man. I sent him a card that I would breakfast with him to-morrow, if not inconvenient for him: his answer is just come, which you shall hear:—As breakfasting will be attended with some inconveniences in the present state of his family, he will be very glad of the favour of his company to a family dinner to-morrow at two o'clock. What can be the meaning of this? *How can breakfasting be inconvenient to a family that dines?* Can he wish to lie long in the morning, that Queen Mab may be with him, "tickling the parson as he lies asleep?" or can his wife and daughter not dress early enough? Pray guess in your next, with a sacerdotal sagacity, what this can be. I shall try to learn, and let you know. It is now early in the morning. I am writing in a great English parlour, to have my letter ready

for the post at nine; it is comfortable to have such an acquaintance as Palmer, so situated. I have thought of making a good acquaintance in each town on the road. No man has been more successful in making acquaintance easily than I have been: I even bring people quickly on to a degree of cordiality. I am a quick fire, but I know not if I last sufficiently, though surely, my dear Temple, there is always a warm place for you. With many people I have compared myself to a taper, which can light up a great and lasting fire though itself is soon extinguished. I called on Mrs. Collingwood at Morpeth: you have seen how I am received in that house: she desired to be kindly remembered to you and Mrs. Temple.

As to American affairs, I have really not studied the subject: it is too much for me perhaps, or I am too indolent or frivolous. From the smattering which newspapers have given me, I have been of different minds several times. That I am a Tory, a lover of power in monarchy, and a discourager of much liberty in the people, I avow; but it is not clear to me that our colonies are completely our subjects. I am puzzled with the charters. At any rate the measures of Administration appear to have been ill-digested and violent. I should hope that things may now take a good turn. I can figure Britain and the colonies in a most agreeable state, like a father and a son who are both sensible and spirited men, who can make mutual allowances, and who, having a kindness for each other, study to promote a common interest. But selfishness and narrowness of comprehension destroy men and nations. I began "Histoire Philosophique et Politique" before I left Edinburgh: it is eloquent indeed. I promise to read it in London, and we shall talk of it at Mamhead. Mr. Johnson, when enumerating our

Club, observed of some of us, that they talked from books,—Langton in particular. Garrick, he said, would talk from books, if he talked seriously. "*I*," said he, "do not talk from books; *you* do not talk from books." This was a compliment to my originality: but I am afraid I have not read books enough to be able to talk from them. You are very kind in saying that I may overtake you in learning. Believe me though, that I have a kind of impotency of study: however, *nil desperandum est.* I have not yet fixed when I shall be with you; I would make it as late as I can, that the weather may be fine. I need not be at Edinburgh till the 20th May. Might I not see Bath and Bristol in coming to see you? How would it do to get Claxton or Nicholls to come with me? But we will be better alone, as we can pour out all ourselves, as plain as downright Skipper [Shippen] or as old Montaigne. You rejoice me by the information that the Bishops of Exeter and Derry have given you such promises. I hope the former shall make good his, for I would rather keep you in England. The *second* good living that falls can be at no great distance of time. It pleases me that your Essay* has been the occasion of the Bishop's friendship. You are right in resolving to undertake something more extensive: I am sure you have learning and good sense and an elegant style: let me know what you think of writing. For my own part, I have continual schemes of publication, but cannot fix. I am still very unhappy with my father. We are so totally different that a good understanding is scarcely possible. He looks on my going to London just now as an *expedition*, as idle and extravagant, when in reality it is highly improving to me, consider-

* "An Essay on the Clergy, their Studies, Recreations," &c. London, 1774.

ing the company which I enjoy; and I think it is also for my interest, as in time I may get something. Lord Pembroke was very obliging to me when he was in Scotland, and has corresponded with me since. I have hopes from him. How happy should I be to get an independency by my own influence while my father is alive!

I am in charming health and spirits. There is a handsome maid at this inn, who interrupts me by coming sometimes into the room. I have no confession to make, my priest; so be not curious.

* * * * * *

Dr. Young says,—

"A fever argues better than a Clarke."

It is as fair reasoning for me to say that this handsome maid (Matty is her name) argues better than—whom you please. But remember, I am only speculating. My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and kind wishes to your young ones. Write to me at Messrs. Dilly's. Let us keep up a close fire, now that I am free from business.

I am ever, my dear friend,
Most faithfully yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

50] LONDON, *4th April*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—My last was indeed a characteristical letter: I was quite in my old humour. My mind, formerly a wild, has been for some years pretty well enclosed with moral fences; but I fear the fences are stone hedges (to use a strange expression of Mr. Johnson in his Journey) of a loose construction, for a storm of passion would blow them down; when

at Grantham, there was a pretty brisk gale, which shook them, but now Reason, that steady builder and overseer, has set them firm; or they have proved to be better than I thought them, for my enclosures are in as good order as ever. I thank you however for your friendly props; your kind counsels pleased me much.

Franklin has written upon stilling the waves of the ocean by oil, as I see you would quiet the turbulent Americans by lenient measures.

Your soft admonitions would at any time calm the tempests of my soul. I told you that my arguments for concubinage were only for theory; the patriarchs might have a plurality, because they were not taught that it was wrong; but I, who have always been taught that it is wrong, cannot have the same enjoyment without an impression of its being so, and consequently without [my moral sense suffering]. But is not this prejudice? Be it so.

I think I told you in my last that I am proud of having such a friend, when I read your elegant letter upon Mr. Johnson's Journey, and other subjects: I am prouder to-day. Mr. Mason concludes his "Life of Gray" with a character of him, which he says is well written, and which he says he has taken from the *London Magazine*. He mentions it as by an anonymous writer. What is it, think you, but a character of Gray written by you to me in a letter soon after his death, and which I greatly admired, and copied out for the Magazine, of which I am a proprietor? It appears to great advantage as the peroration of Mason's "Life of Gray," and Mason has written several notes upon it. If you are not to have the book sent down to you by Lord Lisburne immediately, I will have the character and notes reprinted in a newspaper, and send you a copy. Mr. Mason must be informed who it is

that wrote a character which he has thought worthy of so much distinction. When you and I sat up all night at Cambridge and read Gray with a noble enthusiasm; when we first used to read Mason's "Elfrida," and when we talked of that elegant knot of worthies, Gray, Mason, and Walpole, etc., how would (or should) we have been elated to know that a character drawn by you should be placed, by the hands of Mason, upon the top of Gray's pyramid as a suitable apex!

You must write; you must publish; you must have fame; your letters are admirable. Were you as rich as Pliny, had you his fine seat,* your epistles would be as good; for, like all other men of sensibility, your writings are coloured by your circumstances.

I was not long in town without calling on Claxton; he is the most unchangeable man that I almost ever knew; this year however two considerable varieties have occurred; he has resumed his own hair, and has ascended to the second story of No. 21.

I had last night an unexpected call to be at the Bar of the House of Commons this day for Captain Erskine, brother to Miss Floyer's husband, as counsel for him in the Clackmannan election, where he is petitioner: I had neither wig nor gown with me. I posted to Claxton's early this morning, and he has kindly lent me both: I know not but in equity he ought to have a share of the guineas which they bring. He tells me you are about some Church History: let it be concise and philosophical; I should think it will have success.

I have not yet seen Lord Lisburne; I shall call on him soon, and hope to get acquainted with him. You have drawn me at whole length in your last; you have analyzed me too. I am indeed as happy as you could wish. To-day I dine at Sir John Pringle's; to-morrow

* *Sic in orig.*

at Dilly's, with Mr. Johnson and Langton, etc.; Thursday, at Tom Davies's, with Mr. Johnson, and some others; Friday, at the Turk's Head, Gerrard Street, with our Club, Sir Joshua Reynolds, etc., who now dine once a month, and sup every Friday. My forenoons are spent in visiting, and you know the distances of London make that business enough. Mr. Johnson has allowed me to write out a supplement to his Journey, but I wish I may be able to settle to it. This House of Commons work will be good ballast for me. I am little in what is called the gaiety of London; I went to Mrs. Abington's benefit to please Sir Joshua Reynolds. I have been at no other public place except exhibitions of pictures with Lord Mountstuart; he is warmly my friend, and has engaged to do for me. His brother's lady, a sweet, handsome, lively little woman, is my wife's intimate friend: I pass many of my morning hours with her. Paoli and I (for his simple designation is the highest) are to be at Wilton some time between the 10th and 26th of this month; I shall go from thence to your parsonage, and overpower you with vivacity, and return by Bath. My wife and children were well; I heard from them a few days ago. Write often, under cover, to "Col. Archibald Campbell, M.P., London."

Ever yours,

J. B.

51] LONDON, *17th April*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I am indeed enjoying this Metropolis to the full, according to my taste, except that I cannot, I see, have a plenary indulgence from you for Asiatic multiplicity. Be not afraid of me, except when I take too much claret; and then indeed

there is a *furor brevis*, as dangerous as anger. I intended to have set out for Wilton to-morrow; but I am invited to a dinner on the banks of the Thames, at Richard Owen Cambridge's,* where are to be Reynolds, Johnson, and Hermes Harris.† "'*Do you think so?*' *said he.* '*Most certainly,*' *said I.*" Do you remember how I used to laugh at his style when we were in the Temple? He thinks himself an ancient Greek from these little peculiarities, as the imitators of Shakspeare, whom the *Spectator* mentions, thought they had done wonderfully when they had produced a line similar:

"And so good morrow to ye, good Master Lieutenant!"

* Boswell, in acknowledging some useful communications imparted to him by Mr. Cambridge, says of him in laborious compliment, "If a beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, a few miles from London; a numerous and excellent library, which he accurately knows and reads; a choice collection of pictures, which he understands and relishes; an easy fortune; an amiable family; an extensive circle of friends and acquaintances, distinguished by rank, fashion, and genius; a literary fame various, elegant, and still increasing; colloquial talents rarely to be found; and with all those means of happiness enjoying, when well advanced in years, health and vigour of body, serenity and animation of mind, do not entitle him to be addressed *fortunate senex*, I know not to whom in any age that expression could with propriety have been used."—"Life of Johnson," *anno* 1782.

† Spoken of generally in the "Life of Johnson" as Mr. Harris of Salisbury, or James Harris, Esq., father of the first Earl of Salisbury. Dr. Johnson, in reference to his work "Hermes," calls him a "coxcomb."—See "Life of Johnson" (November 3, 1773), where Boswell depreciates while he appears to defend Mr. Harris. In another passage (April 7, 1770) Johnson is made to say, "Harris is a sound, sullen scholar; he does not like interlopers. Harris, however, is a prig, and a bad prig." He seems, however, to have conversed with Mr. Harris tolerably complacently on several occasions; but their friend Boswell has left, as in other cases, no very pleasant impression as to either the worth of Mr. Harris or the charitableness of Dr. Johnson.

I have rather had too much dissipation since I came last to town. I try to keep a journal, and shall show you that I have done tolerably; but it is hardly credible what ground I go over, and what a variety of men and manners I contemplate in a day; and all the time I myself am *pars magna*, for my exuberant spirits* will not let me listen enough. On Wednesday General Paoli and I shall be at Wilton; I should suppose we may stay there till Saturday. I shall take the fly at Salisbury, and so get to Exeter. Write to me at Wilton, by Salisbury, and I will let you know what day I can be at Exeter. I shall not have it in my power to be with you more than two or three days, as I must see Bath and be back here by the first of May; but we shall see what is to be done when we meet.

By all means let us dine with Lord Clifford. Lord Lisburne and I have never met yet. I hope to see him when I return, and then I shall get you what information you want from Lord Stormont. I am just going to the Lord Mayor's grand dinner on Easter Monday, so must conclude. I have only to tell you, as my divine, that I yesterday received the holy sacrament in St. Paul's Church, and was exalted in piety.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple.

Ever yours most affectionately,

J. B.

* "I am, for the most part, either too high strung or too low." February, 1777 (Philobiblion, vol. ii.). In the same paper is another remark of Boswell's, which perhaps may not be misapplied here: "A dull fool was nothing that he should show himself; the great thing is to have your fool well furnished with animal spirits, and he will supply to you a rich fund of risibility." Boswell adds, that he gave expression to this wisdom "*at a certain Court in Germany.*"

CHAPTER VIII

1775

Dr. Johnson represses the publication of the "Tour to the Hebrides" —Preferment for Temple—Mr. Thrale—Beauclerk's elegant villa, &c.—A day's work—Dr. Johnson—Wilkes—Lord Bute's daughter-in-law—Miss Bosville—Return to Edinburgh—Harry Dundas made King's Advocate—Dr. Johnson's injunction—Conjugal love—Contrast between Edinburgh and London—Paoli's kindness—The state and dignity of a coach—Professional practice—Anecdote of Mr. Hume—Courtiers and courtesans—Hume on Pitt—The American War—Boswell's ambition for political power—Hume on Dr. Johnson—Temple on Hume—Letter to Mason—Dr. Black—Lord Auchinleck on Johnson.

THE egotism of one remark, which the reader will find in the following letter, that Dr. Johnson was "not apt to encourage one to *share* reputation with himself," is amusing enough, but on the instance in question, probably true. The association of Boswell with Dr. Johnson, personal and literary, as we have abundant evidence, was not productive of unalloyed satisfaction to the latter. Boswell's plan of writing out his remarks for Temple to revise, especially if it means that the letters are to be fathered upon Temple, is a curious proposition; but Boswell was very anxious to publish his journal, while Dr. Johnson was content that his own work should not be interfered with. In the following letter some interesting conversations with Hume will be found recorded. Boswell was now, it seems, as diligent with Hume as he was at other times with Dr. Johnson.

52] LONDON, 10*th May*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I had the pleasure to receive from you yesterday one of the most judicious letters you ever wrote. I mean that in it you judge with more propriety of yourself than I have almost ever seen you do. There is more of the γνῶθι σεαυτόν in it than usual. Depend upon it, my excellent friend, you are in the very situation adapted to your bodily frame and disposition of mind,—a pretty little parish, a fine country, a relation and a friend for your patron.

I breakfasted with his Lordship of Lisburne yesterday: he has a great value for you, and knows you perfectly. He said, if you had been the greatest chief in Scotland he could not have treated you with more respect. My Lady is very amiable, and spoke of you in such terms as charmed me. I am clear that you should not leave Mamhead, unless for some very advantageous settlement indeed. My Lord's chief expectations for you are from the Bishop of Exeter. His own chaplain only stands between you and promotion in his diocese. I would rather wish you to have less in Devonshire, as that you may continue at Mamhead, than a much better living in Ireland. I am very willing that you should rise and have more money; but believe me, neither the one nor the other are essential to your happiness, or to that of your children.

I am at present in a *tourbillon* of conversations; but how come you to throw in the Thrales among the Reynoldses and the Beauclerks? Mr. Thrale is a worthy, sensible man, and has the wits much about his house; but he is not one himself. Perhaps you mean Mrs. Thrale.

I have not written out another line of my remarks

on the Hebrides. I found it impossible to do it in London. Besides Dr. Johnson does not seem very desirous that I should publish any supplement. *Between ourselves, he is not apt to encourage one to share reputation with himself.* But don't you think I may write out my remarks in Scotland, and send them to be revised by you, and then they may be published freely? Give me your opinion of this.

I am ashamed to say that I have not yet written to Mason about your character of Gray.* It would have been too late for the second edition of his book, which is come out. I shall certainly write. Lord Lisburne is to send you the books you mention whenever he has a case made up. You will devour Gray, I suppose, with eagerness; but perhaps you will be disappointed. Dr. Johnson does not like the book; he however says, that one should consider these letters were written and received in a long series of years, and so might do very well at the time; whereas now we must read them as one mass, which makes a great difference. I shall talk to Davies of Muratori. Claxton has, I hope, forgiven me; but he has not asked me to dine, and I am apprehensive is not quite pleased; but I shall call on him again.

I have now been twice at Commons in the Inner Temple; I shall be twice next week, so as to make one Term. Direct for me at Edinburgh, after Saturday, as I go next week. I am much pleased that I am now a favourite with Mrs. Temple. Make my best compliments to her. Adieu, my dearest friend!

Ever yours,

J. B.

* See *ante*, p. 185.

53] STREATHAM, 17*th May*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE.—It gives me acute pain that I have not written more to you since we parted last; but I have been like a skiff in the sea, driven about by a multiplicity of waves. I am now at Mr. Thrale's villa, at Streatham, a delightful spot. Dr. Johnson is here too. I came yesterday to dinner, and this morning Dr. Johnson and I return to London; and I go with Mr. Beauclerk to see his elegant villa and library, worth £3000, at Muswell Hill, near Highgate, and return and dine with him. I hope Dr. Johnson will dine with us. I am in that dissipated state of mind that I absolutely cannot write; I at least imagine so. But while I glow with gaiety, I feel friendship for you, nay, admiration of some of your qualities, as strong as you could wish. My excellent friend, let us ever cultivate that mutual regard which, as it has lasted till now, will, I trust, never fail.

Worthy Claxton had not taken my neglect amiss: he has been in a hurry when I imagined him not satisfied with me. I ate bread and cheese and drank negus with him at his chambers on Sunday evening.

I have a cause to come on in the House of Lords, on Friday; it may perhaps last till Monday. I must set off for Edinburgh on Monday evening, to be in time for the General Assembly.

On Saturday last I dined with John Wilkes and his daughter, and nobody else, at the Mansion-house; it was a most pleasant scene. I had that day breakfasted with Dr. Johnson; I drank tea with Lord Bute's daughter-in-law, and I supped with Miss Boswell. What variety!

Mr. Johnson went with me to Beauclerk's villa, Beauclerk having been ill: it is delightful, just at

Highgate. He has one of the most numerous and splendid private libraries that I ever saw; green-houses, hot-houses, observatory, laboratory for chemical experiments, in short everything princely. We dined with him at his box at the Adelphi. Write next to me at Edinburgh. My best compliments to Mrs. Temple.

I am ever most affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

I have promised to Dr. Johnson to read when I get to Scotland, and to keep an account of what I read: I shall let you know how I go on. My mind must be nourished.

54] GRANTHAM, *22nd May*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Here I am again on my return from London, in almost as good spirits as when I wrote to you on my way to that metropolis; but the handsome chambermaid is gone from the inn, and I have the prospect of seeing my excellent wife very soon. I beg your pardon for neglecting to speak to Davies about Muratori; I was really in such a hurry of variety that it escaped me. You can easily write to him, or make Claxton call at his shop. I drank tea with Miss Claxton one day last week, and sat with her till he came home from the Antiquarian Society. I hope I am well with that worthy man and his sister; better people cannot be found. Only think, Temple, of a law promotion in Scotland; Harry Dundas is going to be made King's Advocate,—Lord Advocate at thirty-three! I cannot help being angry and somewhat fretful at this; he has, to be sure, strong parts, but he is a coarse, unlettered, unfanciful dog. Why is he so lucky? is not such an office degraded by his getting it? By some strange coincidence

he, a branch of a Whig family, is a great favourite of Lord Mansfield, and so he has jumped so high now, for I believe Lord Rockingham made him Solicitor-General. Tell me, is it wrong to feel this at his success?

I have now eat a Term's Commons in the Inner Temple. You cannot imagine what satisfaction I had in the form and ceremony of the *Hall*. I must try to prevail with my father to consent to my trying my fortune at the English Bar. Do what I may, I have a treasure in having your friendship. I passed a delightful day yesterday. After breakfasting with Paoli, and worshipping at St. Paul's, I dined *tête-à-tête* with my charming Mrs. Stuart, of whom you have read in my journal; she refused to be of a party at Richmond, that she and I might enjoy a farewell interview. We dined in all the elegance of two courses and a dessert, with dumb-waiters, except when the second course and the dessert were served. We talked with unreserved freedom, as we had nothing to fear; we were *philosophical*, upon honour,—not deep, but feeling; we were pious; we drank tea, and bid each other adieu as finely as romance paints. She is my wife's dearest friend; so you see how beautiful our intimacy is. I then went to Mr. Johnson's, and he accompanied me to Dilly's, where we supped; and then he went with me to the inn in Holborn, where the Newcastle Fly sets out: we were warmly affectionate. He is to buy for me a chest of books, of his choosing, off stalls, and I am to read more and drink less; that was his counsel. I have called on my friend Dr. Palmer, and I am now so sleepy that I can scarcely keep my eyes from closing. Tell Mrs. Temple that I am a favourite with her because she knows me better, and that she may be assured that the more she knows me the more

allowance will she make for my faults. God bless and preserve you, my dearest friend!

Ever yours,

J. B.

There is a Miss Silverton in the Fly with me, an amiable creature, who has been in France. I can unite little fondnesses with perfect conjugal love. Remember to put my letters in a book neatly; see which of us does it first.

This postscript lets us into the secret that the letters here presented to the reader were certainly thought worthy of being kept by the writer, and that the idea of other eyes conning them was not absent from his mind.

The Mrs. Stuart above referred to is probably the wife of the gentleman who, once joking Boswell for being ugly, the latter deemed it a pleasant retort to ask him whether his *wife* thought so.

55] EDINBURGH, *3rd June*, 1775.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—A better journey could not be than my last from London to Edinburgh. I was in great health and spirits; and every occurrence of every sort was made into amusement of some kind or other, as we are told distillers will extract a spirit from substances in themselves disagreeable enough. I visited my brother John near Newcastle, and found him pretty much in the same state as when I saw him in March; he does not seem to be unhappy. On my arrival here I had the pleasure to find my wife and two little daughters as well as I could wish; but indeed, my worthy priest, it required some philosophy to bear the change from England to Scotland. The unpleasing tone, the rude familiarity, the barren conversation of

those whom I found here, in comparison with what I had left, really hurt my feelings. The excellent Laird of Grange happened to be here for some days after I came down; he was a comfort to me. He was delighted with my account of my late jaunt into Devonshire; and Lord Clifford and his old trees and the priests, etc., feasted his imagination.

The General Assembly is sitting, and I practise at its Bar. There is *de facto* something low and coarse in such employment, though on paper it is a Court of *Supreme Judicature;* but guineas must be had. I have written a conciliating letter to my father, but I fear he is callous. If he persists in retaining the allowance or establishment which he has hitherto paid me, I shall be somewhat embarrassed. I trust however that he will not be so unreasonable. If Lord Mountstuart would but get me an independency from the King, while my father lives, I should be a fine fellow.

Do you know, it requires more than ordinary spirit to do what I am to do this very morning: I am to go to the General Assembly and arraign a judgment pronounced last year by Dr. Robertson, John Home, and a good many more of them, and they are to appear on the other side. To speak well when I despise both the cause and the Judges, is difficult; but I believe I shall do wonderfully. I look forward with aversion to the little, dull labours of the Court of Session. You see, Temple, I have my troubles as well as you have. My promise under the venerable yew has kept me sober. You shall hear from me often. What would I give to have you here to-day, that I might be cheered by your company after my day's drudgery! My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and kind wishes to the young ones. Pray let me be

respectfully remembered to Lord and Lady L. I never received Lord L.'s letter.

Ever most faithfully yours,

J. B.

There is a strange notion expressed in the following letter by the writer, that he had earned the hospitality General Paoli extended to him, and which he so excessively enjoyed.

56] EDINBURGH, *6th June*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Believe me, your excellent letter of the 27th of May, which I received last night, after my coming home fatigued after seeing a review, was exceedingly refreshing to me; nay, it elevated my mind higher than I can well express to so intimate a friend; for it is most certain that all expressions of compliment or kindness between such friends as we are ought to be superfluous. General Paoli told me lately that his brother was ill; he consulted physicians in London, and informed him of what they said; but he never once put in words that he was sorry or affectionately concerned, for he thought that would be quite unnecessary. He was so obliging as to apply this remark to me: "I need not tell you," said he, "that everything in my power is at your disposal." For the last fortnight that I was in London, since I saw you, I lay at his house, and had the command of his coach. My lodgings in Gerrard Street were taken by a gentleman for a longer time than I could stay; so it was obliging my landlord to quit them, and all cards and messages of every kind were taken in there for me. I felt more dignity when I had several servants at my devotion, a large apartment, and the convenience and state of a coach; I recollected that *this dignity in Londo*

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was honourably acquired by my travels abroad, and my pen after I came home, so I could enjoy it with my own approbation; and in the extent and multiplicity of the Metropolis, other people had not even the materials for finding fault, as my situation was not particularly known.

Thus far I have written, when my clerk warns me I shall be late for the post. Let me then only tell you that I wrote to Mason a week ago; and that I am happier than you can imagine at the prospect of your letters *addressed to me;** it is a charming thought. Wyvill is here; I dined at his father's to-day. His wife is very homely indeed; he and Sir Alexander Dick, who was there, begged that I would send you their best compliments. Wyvill bid me tell you he was sorry he could give you no aid on Church history, as he has not studied it. Adieu, my dearest friend!

Ever yours,

J. B.

Best compliments to Mrs. Temple.

57] EDINBURGH, 19*th June*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—This summer I hope shall be much more fertile than usual in letters between you and me. Our late comfortable week at Mamhead has had the best effect on my mind: when harassed and fretted with Court of Sessions business, when vexed to think myself a coarse labourer in an obscure corner, I get into good humour again by recollecting that I am Temple's most intimate friend; that Temple, who knows me perfectly, thinks of me as I know you do. No doubt the practice of the law here is sometimes irksome to me, but it is often a kind of amusement;

* Referring probably to their proposed publication.

I have to consider and illustrate *quicquid agunt homines;* I have to treat of characters, of the history of families, of trade and manufactures, as contracts concerning them are the foundations of many lawsuits; in short, the variety of subjects of which fragments pass through my mind, as a pleader, engages my attention; and, as upon most occasions, I become warmly desirous of my client's success. There is the agitation of contest, and sometimes, in a certain degree, the triumph of victory; but there is also sometimes the discouragement of defeat.

Since I came down I have seen Mr. David Hume several times. I know you love to hear little anecdotes of him, so I shall endeavour to cull as many as I can. I first saw him one forenoon that I called on him; he had Macpherson's History before him, and he said it was the worst style he had ever read, and that Macpherson had written his two volumes in quarto in six weeks; he said he himself did not like to continue the History of England further down, because we have not yet had access to papers sufficient to let us know, with authenticity, the state of affairs; and it was disagreeable to write history which afterwards might be proved not to be true. He spoke highly of the "Histoire Philosophique et Politique," and I wondered to find him excuse very easily the author of that book, for translating long passages from English writers without quoting them, but just ingrafting the passages into his text. He said there are about fifteen pages translated from his History, but he complained of one mistake. He has mentioned that the clergy carried their claim of tithes to so strange an excess that they insisted to have a tenth of the gain of courtesans; the Frenchman, mistaking courtesans for *courtisans* (courtiers) in his own language, makes the tenth to be of

the gains *de ceux qui avaient des emplois à la Cour.* This, said David very justly, takes the salt from the observation. He says Abbé Raynal cannot have written that book himself; the eloquence must have been borrowed. He is, said he, a dull man in conversation; that, however, is not a certain rule for judging that a man cannot write well. But he has written ill; his "Histoire du Parlement d'Angleterre" is very ill written. He says, when he was at Paris, Abbé Raynal was making collections for a work on America, and he supposed the materials have been supplied by him.

On Wednesday last I dined at Sir Alexander Dick's, where we had the Wyvill family, a M. de Septchênes, a very young Parisian, introduced to me in London by Mr. Burke, and who brought letters to me and some others here from Sir John Pringle, and was also recommended by M. Buffon. Mr. Hume was there too. Wyvill was glad to meet with him, as he had never seen him before. He said Mr. Pitt was an instance that in this country eloquence alone, without any other talents or fortune, will raise a man to the highest office. On Thursday I supped at Mr. Hume's, where we had the young Parisian, Lord Kames, and Dr. Robertson, an elegant supper, three sorts of ice-creams. What think you of the northern Epicurus style? I can recollect no conversation. Our writers here are really not prompt on all occasions, as those of London.

On Saturday, the Parisian and Mr. Hume and some gentlemen supped with me,—no fruit that night either. But the word fruit makes me recollect that Hume said Burke's speech on Reconciliation with the Colonies, which I lent to him, had a great deal of flower, a great deal of leaf, and a little fruit.

Yesterday I met Mr. Hume at Lord Kames', in the

forenoon. He said it was all over in America: we *could* not subdue the colonists, and another gun should not be fired, were it not for decency's sake; he meant, in order to keep up an appearance of power. But I think the lives of our fellow-subjects should not be thrown away for such *decency*. He said we may do very well without America, and he was for withdrawing our troops altogether and letting the Canadians fall upon our colonists. I do not think he makes our *right* to tax at all clear. He says there will in all probability be a change of the Ministry soon, which he regrets. Oh, Temple, while they change so often, how does one feel an ambition to have a share in the great department! but I fear my wish to be a man of consequence in the State is much like some of your ambitious sallies.

Mr. Hume and Lord Kames joined in attacking Dr. Johnson to an absurd pitch. Mr. Hume said he would give me half-a-crown for every page of his Dictionary in which he could not find an absurdity, if I would give him half-a-crown for every page in which he did not find one: he talked so insolently, really, that I calmly determined to be at him; so I repeated, by way of telling that Dr. Johnson *could* be touched, the admirable passage in your letter, how the Ministry had set him to write in a way that they "could not ask even their infidel pensioner Hume to write."* Upon honour, I did not give the least hint from whom I had the letter. When Hume asked if it was from an

* The passage of Temple's letter which Boswell then read to Dr. Johnson and Hume, with the object of affecting both uncomfortably, ran thus: "How can your great, I will not say your *pious*, but your *moral* friend, support the barbarous measures of Administration, which they have not the face to ask even their infidel pensioner Hume to defend?" ("Life of Johnson," 21st March, 1778.)

American, I said, No, it was from an English gentleman. "Would a *gentleman* write so?" said he. In short, Davy was finely punished * for his treatment of my revered friend; and he deserved it richly, both for his petulance to so great a character and for his talking so before me (!).

I dined yesterday with Lord Kames and his Lady *en famille*, and got from my Lord a good deal of his life. He says he will put down particulars of himself if I will put them together and publish them. I think he has eminence enough to merit this. This forenoon Mr. Hume came in awhile to my brother lawyer Mr. Crosbie's, where I was sitting. He did not say much: I only remember his remark, that characters depend more on original formation than on the way we are educated; "for," said he, "princes are educated uniformly, and yet how different are they! how different was James the Second from Charles the Second!"

I am glad you are going to compose sermons; I shall ask Dr. Johnson in my next what is the best Commentary on the Bible. Among old sermons, he mentioned Latimer's and Sanderson's, which I find you do not like, and I forget what others.

I believe I mentioned to you that I dined one day at old Mr. Wyvill's. He and his daughter, and our friend and his wife, and Sir Alexander and Miss Dick dined with us here; and last night Dr. Wyvill came and sat with me a long while, and we had a very solid, good *tête-à-tête;* he asked me kindly to his Seat. He is gone to-day.

I enclose you a copy of my letter to Mason, together with his answer, which I received this afternoon.

* Whether Temple could be quite pleased with the turn of this conversation, brought about by Boswell's officiousness, is somewhat doubtful. The "talking so before me" is thoroughly Boswellian.

I certainly wrote to him with sufficient civility; yet his answer is, I think, very dry and ill-humoured. Worthy Grange, who was with me, said he must be a surly child. Observe with what arrogance he talks of his *strictures* on your character of Gray; when I published it, I did not know that he was preparing memoirs: I fancy he is of a sour temper. Pray return me my copy and his letter, and tell me if I should write to him again. I shall ask from Lord Hailes a sheet of his Annals to send you. Still I have not begun to read; but my resolution is lively, and I trust I shall have it in my power soon to give you an account of my studies: all that I can say for myself at present is, that I attend, along with John Swinton and others, a course of lectures and experiments by Dr. Black, Professor of Chemistry,—a study which Dr. Johnson recommends much.

My father is most unhappily dissatisfied with me. My wife and I dined with him on Saturday; he did not salute her, though he had not seen her for three months; nor did he so much as ask her how she did, though she is advanced in pregnancy. I understand he fancies that if I had married another woman I might not only have had a better portion with her, but might have been kept from what he thinks idle and extravagant conduct. He harps on my going over Scotland with a brute* (think, how shockingly erroneous!), and wandering (or some such phrase) to London. In vain do I defend myself: even the circumstance that my last jaunt to London did not cost me £20—as I got forty-two guineas in London—does not affect him. How hard it is that I am totally excluded from parental comfort! I have a mind to go to Auchinleck next autumn, and try what living in a mixed stupidity of

* Referring to Dr. Johnson, the "auld Dominie."

attention to common objects, and restraint from expressing any of my own feelings, can do with him. I always dread his making some bad settlement. My wife joins me in best compliments to you and Mrs. Temple. My love to the children. Go on with your Green-book scheme; I delight in the prospect.

Ever yours,

J. B.

CHAPTER IX

1775

Hypochondria—Proposed publication of Mr. Temple's letters to Boswell—Lord Hailes' annals of Scotland—Lord Lisburne—Capability Brown—Edmund Burke—Boswell's pedigree—Allowance by his father—American War—Conjugal society—Boswell's estimation of himself—His father's views—Divarication of the two—Family settlements—Birth of a son—Dundas—Dr. Johnson on the Continent—Speculation on happiness.

In several passages of the letters in this chapter, we see that Mr. Temple had it in contemplation to prepare for the press the letters, or part of them, which he had addressed to Boswell during this correspondence. The intention of publishing them as "Letters to James Boswell," seems to have been subsequently abandoned.

The disgust which poor Boswell experienced, and in his letters frequently expresses, on account of the appreciation which Lord Auchinleck both felt and exhibited for his son—so ludicrously different to that of the son himself, and "a wonderful number of mankind" besides—is again reiterated.

58] EDINBURGH, *12th August*, 1775.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—Again there has been a sad interval in our correspondence, but do not blame me. I have had a pretty severe return this summer of that melancholy, or hypochondria, which is inherent in my constitution, and from which I have suffered miserably in former years, though since my marriage I have been

wonderfully free from it. Your languor and discontent are occasioned by a gentler species of that distemper. You have a slow fever,—I, a raging one. While gloomy and fretful, and grossly indolent, I was shocked with the recollection of my good spirits, gaiety, and activity, as a man with a headache is shocked by bright sunbeams. But I need not describe my feelings to you. The strange thing was that I did not write to you a few lines, merely as firing guns of distress. Nobody here but my wife and worthy Johnston had the least notion of my being at all uneasy; for I have been remarkably busy this summer. I wrote about threescore law papers, and got £124 in fees during last Sessions of two months. The Court rose yesterday, and this day the clouds have begun to recede from my mind, I cannot tell from what cause. My promise under the solemn yew I have observed wonderfully, having never infringed it till, the other day, a very jovial company of us dined at a tavern, and I unwarily exceeded my bottle of old Hock; and having once broke over the pale, I run wild, but I did not get drunk. I was however intoxicated, and very ill next day. I ask your forgiveness, and I shall be more strictly cautious for the future. The drunken manners of this country are very bad.

I am exceedingly pleased with the Sketches which you have sent me.* Your assuming, or rather appearing as, a character, to give them a dramatical cast is very right, but I would guard you against loading the character too much with evil. I have therefore suggested the omission of some passages and the softening of others. You know it is a trite remark, that there is nothing more difficult for a man than to speak of himself; and you will judge if anything more

* Probably "Historical and Political Memoirs."

is necessary to introduce the letters, or rather to account for their being written, than our long friendship, great distance, and the effects of a literary correspondence on us both, which you well describe when you talk of my being engaged in the pursuits of a virtuous ambition. It appears to me not well to omit the *Scotch Bar*, at which I ply much against my will; but let it remain. *Letters* are now become so common that, like sermons, they do not attract public curiosity. I would therefore have the title of your volume to be, "Remarks on various Authors, in a series of Letters to James Boswell, Esq.," or some such arrangement, so as that "Letters" may not stand in the front. I have no doubt of your making a valuable, elegant book.

Lord Hailes very readily agreed to my sending you a specimen of his "Annals of Scotland." I give you a double treat, for I enclose you a specimen, with emendations by Dr. Johnson. Sir David is to publish first an edition in quarto, with notes, in the form of one sheet of the specimen sent. If that edition takes, he is then to publish one in octavo, without notes, in the form of another sheet of the specimen sent. The text of both editions will be the same. Above two hundred pages of the quarto edition are thrown off. He says he will not sell his copy so as that the book shall be too high priced. He will give us four hundred pages in quarto, such as you see, for fifteen shillings. Dr. Johnson likes the work; it has the most minute authenticity, and the style is concise and real. You will return me the specimen, and tell me how you liked it and Dr. Johnson's critical remarks: he has gone through a great deal of the work. I told Lord Hailes you were Lord Lisburne's clergyman: he said my Lord was his intimate friend. Pray talk to Lord L. of him, and at the same time

present my best respects to his Lordship and Lady Lisburne.

You are certainly right, that none are so happy as they appear to be. You tell me that Lord L., with his large estates, fine place, fine wife, seat at the Admiralty Board, elegant table, etc. etc., is not happy. I believe it, for I can trust to your opinion; yet I cannot think but he has excellent portions of existence, and I imagine I should prefer his worst hours to the best of a Scotch lawyer or a country Laird. What say you to Lord Clifford's happiness, with his noble park? But, by the bye, Sir Joshua Reynolds told me that Capability Brown's compliment, of nature being lewd, is what he pays upon many occasions. What say you to Lord Clifford's family pride, his vivacity, the varieties which move his mind from being a Roman Catholic? I recollect that even in the midst of all that surrounded us at Ugbrook, even in the midst of the merriment about Wilkes and Tuberville Needham, ("Honest Tub,") a cloudiness damped my mind; but I had been exhausted by riding all the forenoon, and expatiating upon rural beauties which I did not much feel.* But it is absurd to hope for continual happiness in this life; few men, if any, enjoy it. I have a kind of belief that

* There are frequent repetitions of this sentiment; and we may accept his own evidence to show that Boswell was not impressed with the beauties or picturesque of landscape. Dr. Johnson's feelings on the same subject confirmed his views, as one reads in the "Life of Johnson" thus: "We walked in the evening in Greenwich Park. He asked me, I suppose by way of trying my disposition, 'Is not this very fine?' Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of nature, and being more delighted with the 'busy hum of men,' I answered, 'Yes, Sir, but not equal to Fleet Street.' *Johnson:* 'You are right, Sir.'" (July 30, 1763.) Again, "As we walked to St. Clement's Church, I again remarked, that Fleet Street was the most cheerful scene in the world. 'Fleet Street,' said he, 'is in my mind more delightful than Tempe.'" (April 17, 1778.)

Edmund Burke does: he has so much knowledge, so much animation, and the consciousness of so much fame. I am now writing on Monday the 14th. The post has brought me a letter from the Lord Mayor Wilkes. I wrote to him, begging him that he would authenticate a pedigree of our family for my brother David. He writes, "The pedigree was authenticated with all due solemnity, and in a more beautiful manner than has been done before at the Lord Mayor's office, that the name of Boswell may be considered in as fair a light in Spain as it is in Scotland and England." He says, "I expect in half an hour a score of worthy liverymen, friends of Wilkes and liberty, whom so liberal a Scot as you would rejoice to hear and make libations with." My company are just arrived. Mr. Boswell in a bumper—huzza! huzza! huzza!

Tell me my dear Temple, if a man who receives so many marks of more than ordinary consideration can be satisfied to drudge in an obscure corner, where the manners of the people are disagreeable to him? You see how soon I revive again. Could I but persuade my father to give me £400 a year, and let me go to the English Bar, I think I should be much better. That however seems to be impossible. As he is bound for £1000 which I owe, he has resolved to lessen his allowance to me of £300 to £200. I must not dispute with him, but he is really a strange man. He is gone to Auchinleck. I intend to pass a little while with him there soon, and sound him, or rather see just what attention can produce.

Nothing have I read yet except three small treatises on Midwifery, as I was engaged in a cause concerning the duration of pregnancy. I last year began Robertson's "Charles V.;" I shall finish it in the first place. I forgot that I have read half through a trans-

lation of the "Lusiad" of Camoens by Mr. Mickle, a Scotsman, who resides near Oxford, and I shall have done with it in a day or two; it will be published early next winter. It seems to be a work of capital merit; he has translated it well, and enriched it with many good notes.

Your cider is arrived, and is excellent; I am much obliged to you for it. I am to give worthy Johnston a dozen of it.

While afflicted with melancholy, all the doubts which have ever disturbed thinking men come upon me. I awake in the night dreading annihilation, or being thrown into some horrible state of being. We must own, my friend, that moral and religious truths are not such as that we can contemplate them by reason with a constant certainty. The disposition of our tempers, of our spirits, influences our persuasion, though we know that we may help it in part. The other night, while I was gloomy, I felt a strong impression or recollection of the phrase in Scripture, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found." My wife is an admirable companion for a man of my atrabilious temperament, for she has a good store of common sense and cheerfulness. She and my little daughters are very well; but you cannot imagine what apprehensions I have at times lest I should lose them, or they me, by death.

I am growing more and more an American. I see the unreasonableness of taxing them without the consent of their Assemblies; I think our Ministry are mad in undertaking this desperate war. Let us write oftener; your correspondence is a great comfort to me. My sincerest compliments to Mrs. Temple and love to the children.

Ever most affectionately yours,

J. B.

59] AUCHINLECK, *2nd September*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Here I am, according to my purpose. I came to Auchinleck on Monday last, and I have patiently lived at it till Saturday evening. To-morrow I shall go to the Parish Kirk and hear Mr. John Dur preach. On Monday I go in my father's coach to Glasgow, and on Tuesday he goes west on his Circuit, and I go east to my home at Edinburgh, to my valuable spouse and my dear little children. Intervals of absence make conjugal society more agreeable, especially when the time of absence has not been very happily spent. You may remember how I described to Lord Lisburne the causes of my aversion to the country: it is hardly credible how difficult it is for a man of my sensibility to support existence in the family where I now am. My father, whom I really both respect and affectionate (if that is a word, for it is a different feeling from that which is expressed by *love*, which I can say of you from my soul), is so different from me. We *divaricate* so much, as Dr. Johnson said, that I am often hurt when, I dare say, he means no harm; and he has a method of treating me which makes me feel myself like a *timid boy*, which to *Boswell* (comprehending all that my character does in my own imagination and in that of a wonderful number of mankind) is intolerable. His wife too, whom in my conscience I cannot condemn for any capital bad quality, is so narrow-minded, and, I don't know how, so set upon keeping him under her own management, and so suspicious and so sourishly tempered, that it requires the utmost exertion of practical philosophy to keep myself quiet. I however have done so all this week to admiration: nay, I have appeared good-humoured; but it has cost me drinking a considerable quantity of strong beer to dull my faculties. The place is greatly

improved; it is really princely. I perceive some dawnings of taste for the country. I have sauntered about with my father, and he has seen that I am pleased with his works. But what a discouraging reflection is it that he has in his possession a renunciation of my birthright, which I *madly* granted to him, and which he has not the generosity to restore now that I am doing beyond his utmost hopes, and that he may incommode and disgrace me by some strange settlements, while all this time not a shilling is secured to my wife and children in case of my death! You know, my best friend, that as an old Laird of this family gave the estate to the heir male, though he had four daughters, I hold it as a sacred point of honour not to alter that line of succession. Dr. Johnson praises me for my firmness, and my own mind is immovable. There is a kind of heroism in it, but I have severe paroxysms of anxiety; and how unhappy is it for a man to have no security for what is dear to him but his father's death! Do not reason against me; try to comfort me. My father is visibly failing: perhaps I may get him yet to do as I wish. In the meantime I have written plainly to my brother David, to see if he will settle on my wife and daughters, in case of his succeeding. I shall now know whether trade has destroyed his liberal spirit. This is quite a *family letter*, written in the utmost confidence. Perhaps all may happen well. May God preserve you to me, my dearest friend!

Ever yours,

J. B.

60] EDINBURGH, *10th October*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I am really uneasy that I have been so long of hearing from you. I wrote to you in August, I think, from this place, and in September

from Auchinleck; but, instead of complaining of your silence, I feel a kind of exultation in thus being superior to you in the duties of friendship. However, to put an end to uninteresting reflections, let me inform you that last night my wife was safely delivered of a *son*. You know, my dearest friend, of what importance this is to me; of what importance it is to the family of Auchinleck, which you may be well convinced is my supreme object in this world. My wife was very ill in her labour but is in a good way, and the child appears to be as well as we could wish. My kind compliments to Mrs. Temple. I am hurried, and cannot expatiate on this happy event; I hope you will find time to do it with your elegant pen, thou characterizer of Gray!

Pray present my respects to Lord and Lady Lisburne and Lord and Lady Clifford, and make them understand how happy I am.

Ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

61] EDINBURGH, 16*th October*, 1775.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—By the very return of the post I can make you easy with respect to an apprehension which your anxiety about me has made you form, with probability enough too, and which has been magnified and darkened in the cloudy musings of dismal dreaming. Upon my honour, I did not write the attack in the newspapers upon Dundas and Cochrane; nor do I know who wrote it or who sent it; in short, I know nothing at all of it. I confess I did intend to have written against them, for daring to assume most illegal powers; but I considered better, and let it alone: you are right in suggesting that it would be attributed to envy. Were it not that I feel myself in *right*, and,

in my views at least, *near* the present *Lord Advocate*, I should certainly trim him for his insolence, though, to speak with candour, I rather believe that he is, upon the whole, a man of abilities and a man of worth.

I imagine that this very day my letter of the 10th, informing you of the birth of my son, has reached you; upon more accurate computation of the course of the post, it would be yesterday. I figure the joy with which you and Mrs. Temple would receive the news; it is, you know, of very great importance to me to have a son, considering how firmly rooted my old feudal principles are; and I imagine my wife, having brought an heir male, will make her be more regarded by my father.

For fear of being too late for the post, I conclude for this night, but shall very soon write to you again. I am much pleased with your visit at Mount Edgecumbe, but let me know your faults; I will endeavour to understand them. I will force a taste for rural beauties. I know Mr. Jerningham's pleasing poetry; I saw him one day in the street, in London, with Langdon. Did Lord Lisburne introduce you at Mount Edgecumbe, or how did you go? You see how highly I think of being there; General Paoli is to take me thither. My wife and children are well. Best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to the young ones.

Ever most warmly yours,
JAMES BOSWELL

In the following letter Boswell remarks, that "Dr. Johnson has said nothing to me of my remarks during my journey with him, which I wish to write." Dr. Johnson, however, we know, *had* an opinion upon Boswell in the capacity of travelling reporter; for he writes to Mrs. Thrale, asking her how

Boswell's journal had entertained her; "One would think," says he, "the man had been hired to be a spy upon me; he was very diligent, and caught opportunities of writing from time to time." Still, as before observed, the Doctor was not willing to have Boswell's amusing remarks published, especially as they were open to, and indeed when published incurred, no little ridicule. Dr. Johnson had travelled over the same ground in his own work, which must nevertheless be pronounced far less interesting than that of his companion.

62] EDINBURGH, *6th November*, 1775.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—This is to be only a letter of congratulation on the very good news which you have announced to me. *The best living in the Diocese of Exeter*, and the present incumbent eighty-six! with such a prospect can you be dispirited? If you attain to such a reality, will you have the assurance to complain any more? I most heartily rejoice at this great good fortune. Your removal to Ireland had something dreary in it; Old England is your clime, and Devonshire has chiefly the *sun and summer gale*. We shall meet once a year; we shall be often in London together. We may visit some part of the Continent, which, by the bye, Dr. Johnson has done lately, with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. I long to have some account of his peregrination in Gaul. How do you imagine he would pass his time in Paris? If he got fairly into conversation with some of the French *beaux esprits*, how would he stun them by one of his violent explosions? I have seen the preface to his Dictionary, translated by Diderot; and when Madame de Boufflers was in England, she visited him in the Temple.

It pleases me much that you are making good progress in your Essays—I understand by that word your letters to me. I always was sure that they would do

you honour as a man of reading and taste; but I must insist on your putting your name to them, and leaving out, for some future publication, any passages which you do not choose at present to own. I shall be impatient to receive some more of your manuscript.

My wife is recovered remarkably well. This son has been quite a cordial to her. He has been a little unlucky. The nurse had not milk enough; and, as he is a big-boned fellow, he cannot subsist without plentiful sustenance. We have got another nurse, a strong, healthy woman, with an abundant breast. His mother is quite unfit for nursing; she is of a temper so exceedingly anxious.

I have not yet seen Mr. Hume, but shall call on him soon, and then you shall have a letter from me stored with entertainment. I cannot as yet say anything of my studies; I have read the first volume of Robertson's "Charles V.;" when I have finished the book I shall give you my opinion; in the meantime I am really disappointed. I have read a beautiful little French piece, "Consultation sur la Discipline des Avocats;" it will animate my essay on the profession which I follow, if I ever write it. Dr. Johnson has said nothing to me of my remarks during my journey with him, which I wish to write. Shall I task myself to write so much of them a week, and send to you for revisal? If I do not publish them now, they will be good materials for my "Life of Dr. Johnson."

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple and love to the children. I was, upon honour, much pleased when last at Mamhead. What is the reason that no life whatever appears happy in a descriptive detail? Even your life at Mount Edgecumbe would not have appeared happy though you had not added your con-

fession of weariness. I wish you would explain this to me; may it be that life is happy only in masses? For to see a man live, hour by hour, makes us not think him happy so well as reading a detail does. I am afraid this is very confused speculation, but try the sentiment. Read an account how any happy family passes a day, and tell me if you would not wish to live so.*

Lord Lisburne is certainly your patron now. I would wish to write to him to thank him, if you allow me. I hope he will introduce me to your Bishop in the Spring. Adieu, my dearest friend!

I am ever most affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

* Unfortunately Mr. Temple's explanation of this propounded puzzle, although very necessary, is not presented to us.

CHAPTER X

1776

Mrs. Rudd, her trial and treachery—Boswell seeks her acquaintance—At Bath with Dr. Johnson and the Thrales—The yew-tree vow not kept—Habits of drinking—Mrs. Rudd Boswellised—Pure friendship for Mrs. Stuart—The Devonshire family.

Boswell's making the acquaintance of Mrs. Rudd, mentioned at the close of the following letter, affords another instance of his dominant passion for knowing people who had achieved notoriety. It is in reading such letters that one feels almost disposed to exclaim :

> "How much, methinks, I could despise this man,
> But that I am bound in charity against it." *

"The celebrated" wretch was sought out, and, no doubt, for the time incessantly discussed by Boswell, who had successfully aspired to her acquaintance. He observes, in a memorandum of a conversation with Dr. Johnson, "I talked a good deal [to Johnson] of the celebrated Margaret Caroline Rudd, whom I had visited, induced by the fame of her talents, address, and irresistible power of fascination. To a lady who disapproved of my visiting her he said, on a former occasion, 'Nay, Madam, Boswell is in the right; I should have visited her myself, were it not that they have now a trick of putting everything into the newspapers.' This evening he exclaimed, 'I envy him his acquaintance with Mrs. Rudd.'"

Who Mrs. Rudd was will be best seen in the Newgate Calendar. A sufficient account, however, of the trial of her

* "Henry VIII.," Act iii. scene 2.

confederates in crime and of herself, and of her attempt to save herself by turning King's evidence against her paramour and his twin brother, will be found in the "Annual Register" for the year 1775 (vol. xviii.), under the title, "Some Account of the Apprehending and Trying Robert Perreau of Golden Square, Apothecary, Daniel Perreau of Harley Street, and Margaret Caroline Rudd, for divers Forgeries." It is not easy to determine from this account what was the proportion of guilt attaching to each of these individuals respectively, if indeed the brothers Perreau were guilty at all.

Mrs. Rudd used to pass as Mrs. Daniel Perreau; and although there is considerable obscurity as to the part which the Perreaus played in the frauds perpetrated by forging and uttering bonds in the name of William Adair, and possibly some doubt as to the criminality of both of them, as principals at least, yet in the end the brothers were hanged, some months after their trial, protesting their innocence. Mrs. Rudd was acquitted, and was, as we are told, and can readily understand, "confounded with joy at her discharge."

The case is all the more remarkable from the fact that Robert Perreau in the first instance produced Mrs. Rudd at Bow Street, as the person who had given him a bond, which, when he offered it as a security to Messrs. Drummond (the bankers), was discovered to be a forgery. The magistrate admitted her, with somewhat questionable discretion, it would seem, to give evidence for the Crown against the Perreaus. Upon the ground of having thus been allowed to become "King's evidence," she claimed to be exempt from trial, and applied to be discharged forthwith from custody on bail. Lord Mansfield,* however, having considered her claim fully, refused the application. "It has been urged," said he, "that the prisoner in this case is an accomplice, who has been admitted to give evidence; that she has already given evidence, and is further ready to give evidence, to convict her partners in the business; and therefore, that she is entitled by law to the King's pardon, and to a pardon which would operate in bar of her own crime. If she had such a right, we should be bound, *ex debito justitiæ*, to quit her; if she had not such a legal right, but yet came under circumstances sufficient to warrant the

* See Cowper's Reports, p. 331.

Court in saying that she had such a title of recommendation to the King for a pardon, we should bail her, for the purpose of giving her an opportunity of applying for such pardon." After discussing the law of "approvement," the learned Judge thus proceeds: "These being the general rules, let us see how far the present case is applicable to them, or in any degree falls within the reason of them. A bond is detected to have been forged; three persons are apprehended on suspicion—the two Perreaus, and the prisoner (Mrs. Rudd). The Justices, by their affidavit, say they admitted the prisoner as an evidence against the Perreaus, and swear they considered her as an accomplice; and they say they told her 'that if she would speak the truth, and the *whole truth*, not only in respect of the bond in question, but *of all the other forgeries*, that then she should be safe; if not, she would be prosecuted;' and the truth is, she was liable to be prosecuted for all.

"What is the disclosure she makes? It is this, that Daniel Perreau came, with a knife to her throat, and threatened to kill her, if she did not forge *one* of the bonds in question; that, under the terror of death, she forged it; and that Robert Perreau brought the bond before ready filled up. On this information she is no accomplice: she has confessed no guilt, if the fact is true that she was under the fear of immediate death; for it is the will that constitutes the crime. She comes, therefore, in the character of a person injured, in the character of one to whom this violence has been done. Instead of being a party offending, she is a party *offended*, as much as a man who has been robbed on the highway." Lord Mansfield also observes another most material fact, namely, "that her information is flatly contradicted by herself; for, on a voluntary confession of her own, she took the whole guilt upon herself; said that she alone forged the bond for £7500, and that Robert Perreau was an innocent man. If the Justices had known of this confession, they could not have admitted her as evidence." The confession here alluded to was made at Messrs. Drummond's, in the first instance; for when they doubted the genuineness of the signature of the bond, purporting to be that of Mr. Adair, Robert Perreau sent immediately for Mrs. Rudd to explain the matter, as it was she who had handed the bond to him originally, and she thereupon admitted her forgery. Lord Mansfield resolved on the

whole that "her information is false, and the conditions not complied with," and that she must take her trial in due course.

The trial accordingly took place. We read that it "lasted from nine o'clock in the morning till three-quarters past seven. Mrs. Rudd was neatly dressed, in second mourning. During her trial she wrote near fifty notes to her counsel, and displayed a most astonishing composure." The trial was a very painful one. Mrs. Robert Perreau was called as a witness for the prosecution; "and the Counsel, in cross-examining her, were so extremely abrupt that she burst into tears, and was near fainting." Mrs. Rudd, on the other hand, exhibited much firmness in her defence: "she avowed her innocence in explicit terms: said that her life was to be taken to save the Perreaus; and turning to the jury, added, 'I have no reliance but on you: you are honest men, and I am safe in your hands.'" A note to Cowper's Reports gives us the information that the jury brought in their verdict as follows: "Not guilty, according to the evidence before us;" which looks very much as if they thought that there might be some matters *not* before them, as indeed was the fact—her own confession was not given in evidence. The "Annual Register" adds, that "There were the loudest applauses on this acquittal almost ever known in a Court of Justice." We are also informed that the avidity of the public to hear her trial was such that the galleries were crowded "soon after daylight." The fact is, that the issue of Mrs. Rudd's trial was thought to involve the ultimate fate of the brothers Perreau, or at least that of Robert; and the popular fancy had taken the part of the woman as against the men. She seems in some manner to have created great but undeserved interest in her fate; and it was said as Boswell states, that she either had, or was supposed to have, great power of fascination. Nay, that not only did she thus procure her acquittal, but that by her means the unfortunate Perreaus had been snared into the acts which led to their execution. The woman was, however, at the best, infamous enough to have been shunned by persons of ordinary virtue or decency, as we account these qualities nowadays; but she was *notorious*, and this was enough to excite the anxiety of Boswell to see her and talk to her, that he might talk of her. The remarks of the Doctor himself, above referred to, were probably made in some of his *contradictory* moods, for

they hardly accord with the morality which he so sternly professed and practised. Notwithstanding the contempt which we ought to feel for people who flocked, according to a fashionable whim, to associate with a profligate woman, and one not far, if at all, removed from being a murderess, still, as Boswell *did* go to her, and doubtless had his usual extraordinary success in inducing characteristic conversation, we cannot help confessing to a desire that the account which he wrote, for the perusal of his wife and his friend's amusement, had been preserved to us.

The trial of the Perreaus will be found in the Sessions Papers of the Old Bailey (May, 1775), but the case was so remarkable that several publications relating to it issued from the press. The title-page of one is "Prudence triumphing over Vanity and Dissipation, in the History of the Life, Character, and Conduct of Mr. Robert and Mr. Daniel Perreau and Mrs. Rudd; containing an account of everything relating to these Celebrated Personages, their Parentage, Education, Circumstances in Life, and the means by which they brought Ruin, Infamy, and Misery upon themselves: the whole compiled from authentic records, communicated to the Editor by a person well known in the literary world." This person "well known in the literary world" is probably mythical; at all events, it is but fair to state here, that the nature of the work is too scandalous and vulgar to admit of any supposition that Mr. Boswell could be the person alluded to under this designation.

One of the worst features in the woman's history is the cruel letter which she wrote, after her own acquittal and before the execution of the Perreaus, to Lord Weymouth, urging statements incriminating her late confederate Robert Perreau, and endeavouring thus to cut him off from even the slight hope of a pardon. This letter, it is said, was dictated by a noble Worcestershire Lord, to whose house and protection Mrs. Rudd retired immediately upon her acquittal at the Old Bailey. What eventually became of her is not recorded.

The visit to Bath, alluded to in the following letter, was productive of valuable fruit for the "Life of Johnson;" indeed Boswell made good use of his opportunities, during the year 1776, for the purpose of his biography. He was also, it will be observed, now practising his reporting powers upon General

Paoli, in the same way as we have lately seen him employing them on David Hume himself. Paoli proved himself at all times a real friend to Boswell, especially by endeavouring to wean him from his drinking habits. Poor Boswell was indeed now feeling in his constitution the effects of his excesses during social hours, and he became another instance of the great truth which our poet tells us, when he says,—

> "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to scourge us."

63] BATH, *Sunday, 28th April*, 1776.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I am now, for the first time, at this most elegant city, which far exceeds my expectations. I will not attempt a description of it; I have no pencil for visible objects; I can only paint the varieties of mind, of *l'esprit*. You, who gave me so good a picture of Mount Edgecumbe, could also describe Bath; and what would I give to have you here! It is the finest place on earth for you, for you may enjoy its society and its walks without effort or fatigue. I came down from London on Friday in the stage-chaise, or *diligaunce*, as they will call it, and had, by chance, two very agreeable ladies as my companions. I have year after year thought of visiting Bath, and always neglected it, and perhaps I should still have put it off had not Dr. Johnson with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale been here. I lie at an inn and am with them all day. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale were so much afflicted with the loss of their only son that they could not think of going to Italy, so the project is laid aside for this year, to the disappointment of Dr. Johnson, and many a one who wished to look at Italy through his noble intellectual glass. I hope he will go next year. To-morrow he and I are to visit Bristol, and be back at night. I shall stay one day more here, and get

back to London on Wednesday. I must eat Commons in the Inner Temple this week and next, to make out another Term, that I may still be approximating to the English Bar, and the week after I must go to Scotland. My two jaunts this year from London have not left me time to be with you at Mamhead, which, upon my honour, I regret; for you may be sure that it is the truest happiness to me to enjoy the conversation of my most intimate friend, to walk in serene gaiety of heart and mind with you, and to refresh my best dispositions by social intercourse with you. You and I have attained to the perfection of friendship: we have no competition or vanity mixed with our intercourse. Since you cannot come to London, we must be contented to wait till next year for another meeting; but let us write more frequently, I shall gladly give all the assistance I can in ushering your volumes into the world. Will you send them up? I should think you had better agree as to one edition, and see how they succeed: but why not put your name to them, since you think they will do you credit, for how can you get credit for what is anonymous? *

The political disquisitions were a collection by a Mr. Burgh, master of an academy at Newington Green, where I have dined with him; he was a Scotsman, a cousin-german of Dr. Robertson's, the historian, and a discontented Whig; he died not long ago. This collection is much valued by your republican reformers. It is quite adverse to my gentlemanly system. I don't know but you have spoken too highly of Gibbon's book; the Dean of Derry, who is of our Club as well as Gibbon, talks of answering it. I think it is right that as fast as infidel wasps or venomous insects,

* As to what was the proposed publication here referred to, see pp. 194, 198.

whether creeping or flying, are hatched, they should be crushed. Murphy says he has read thirty pages of Smith's "Wealth," but says he shall read no more: Smith too is now of our Club. *It has lost its select merit.* He is gone to Scotland at the request of David Hume, who is said to be dying. General Paoli had a pretty remark when I told him of this: "Ah! je suis fâché qu'il soit détrompé si tôt." I have collected a good many remarkable "Memorabilia Paoli" this season. My promise under the solemn yew at Mamhead was not religiously kept, because a little wine hurried me on too much. The General has taken my word of honour that I shall not taste fermented liquor for a year, that I may recover sobriety: I have kept this promise now about three weeks; I was really growing a drunkard.

You know my curiosity and love of adventure; I have got acquainted with the celebrated Mrs. Rudd. I was sending an account of this to my wife, but as it appeared to me highly entertaining, I thought you should have a reading of it, I therefore send it. Pray take the greatest care of it, and return it to me by the first or second post. You may, if you please, give Lord Lisburne a tasting of it—if that be English. Compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to the children. How hard is it that we are so very far separated! I flatter myself better days are coming Ever yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

64] LONDON, *1st May*, 1776.

I thought my letter would go as soon, and be safer, when put into the post-office at London. I was delighted with Bath. It was consolatory to see that

there was really a place in the world to which one may retire, and be calm, placid, and cheerful: such is my notion of Bath, and I believe it is a general notion. Quin said it was the cradle of age, and a fine slope to the grave. Were I a Baron of the Exchequer, and you a Dean, how well could we pass some time there! Luckily Dr. Taylor has begged of Dr. Johnson to come to London, to assist him in some interesting business; and Johnson loves much to be so consulted, and so comes up on Friday and Saturday, and, I hope, will stay till I set out for Scotland. I am now at General Paoli's, quite easy and gay, after my journey; not wearied in body, or dissipated in mind. I have lodgings in Gerrard Street, Soho, where cards are left to me; but I lie at the General's, *whose attention to me is beautiful.* I am going to sup with Lord Mountstuart, my Mæcenas. You know how I delight in patronage. My intimacy with Mrs. Stuart is friendship, sister indeed to love, but such as I can never look foolish when her husband comes in, who perfectly understands us, and is happy that she is agreeably entertained when he is at his Clubs. I will give you another late saying of Paoli's: "The wound," said he, "given to the Devonshire family has occasioned much disturbance; the Court would willingly cover it with a ribbon of any colour." Perhaps the adventure with Mrs. Rudd is very foolish, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's approbation: judge, then, if you should mention it to Lord L.: is he not to be here?

Direct to the care of Messrs. Dilly. I shall be impatient till I get back Mrs. Rudd. Strahan and Cadell may perhaps be the best treaters for such volumes as you mention; be assured of my attentive exertion about them. My heart is vexed that we do not meet this season.

To the "friendship" which Boswell above speaks of he has referred in his "Boswelliana" with curious taste; he narrates that "Lord Mountstuart said it was observed I was like Charles Fox. Colonel J. Stuart said, with his usual drollery, 'You are much uglier.' I turned to him, full as sly and as droll, 'Does your wife think so, Colonel James?'" But it is added that in this retort *less* was meant than met the ear.

CHAPTER XI

1776–1779

Interval in the correspondence—Temple's circumstances—Dr. Johnson confirms Boswell in his Toryism—A young widow—Louth—Sir Alexander Dick's Georgic—Dr. Armstrong's description of Gibbon—Temple's book and character criticised—Letter from a friend to Temple.

THE next few years were, happily, fertile of material for the "Biography of Johnson," but prove barren in respect of letters belonging to the present collection. We see from the former work that Boswell, during this time, enjoyed opportunities of visiting London and disporting himself in English society, to his intense delight. The date of the next letter is May, 1779.

65] LONDON, 31*st May*, 1779.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Had you been in London a week ago, you would have seen your friend sadly changed for a little. So trifling a matter as letting the nails of my great toes grow into the flesh, particularly in one foot, produced so much pain and inflammation and lameness and apprehension, that I was confined to bed, and my spirits sank to dreary dejection; however this gave me leisure to finish completely the reading of your book. I am now much better, but still unable to walk; and, having received a very wise letter from my dear, sensible, valuable wife, that although my father is in no immediate danger, his indisposition is such

that I ought to be with him, I have resolved to set out tomorrow, being the very first day after completing another term at the Temple. I am sitting comfortably at Mr. Dilly's. The three letters which I have had the pleasure to receive from you during my present visit to London, are lying before me; I have marked the heads as you advise, upon a slip of paper, and, I trust, shall omit no article or particular to which you wish me to attend.

It gives me much satisfaction to understand that your circumstances, as the phrase is, are so good,—£6000 fund, and only £1200 debt, so you have £4800 clear; *i.e.*, at 5 per cent., £240 a year, which, with your living, makes better than £500 a year. Living in Cornwall, you may certainly save handsomely every year, so as to increase your fortune; but do not delay turning your land into money as soon as you can. You must not on any account waver as to your northern jaunt; for it would be sad indeed, if I were disappointed in meeting you this year, after so long a separation. You and I and worthy Johnston will walk in the King's Park, and have all the good ideas we have ever possessed agreeably revived. Is it not curious that at times we are in so happy a frame that not the least trace of former misery or vexation is left upon the mind? but is not the contrary, too, experienced? Gracious Author of our being, do thou bring us at length to steady felicity! What a strange, complicated scene is this life! It always strikes me that we cannot seriously, closely, and clearly examine almost any part of it. We are at pains to bring up children, just to give them an opportunity of struggling through cares and fatigues; but let us hope for gleams of joy here, and a blaze hereafter.*

* A somewhat ambiguous prayer, but doubtless it is to a blaze *of joy* the writer was aspiring.

Let us not dispute any more about political notions. It is now night. Dr. Johnson has dined, drunk tea, and supped with only Mr. Charles Dilly and me, and I am confirmed in my Toryism; what is more, I am happy in my good old principles, could but that sad *necessary shock*, the Revolution, be forgotten.

I know not if Lord Haile's second volume be yet ordered for you. I shall deliver your book to him, and see to your getting his. Mr. Burke told me he had not received your book, yet it was certainly delivered to his old housekeeper. He asked me if it had merit; I said it had learning and elegance of expression, and a great deal about liberty, which he would like, but which I did not like.* He said he would read it, which is a compliment he does not

* Mr. Boswell here seems to forget a certain cap of his, with the inscription "Paoli and Liberty." What the book above referred to is, is not certain: but probably it was either the "Selection of Historical and Political Memoirs," or the "Historical Essay on the Abuse of Unrestrained Power," which was published in 1778. There were also certain "Essays, Moral and Literary" (8vo, Dilly) published in 1777, which might be suggested as the probable work of Mr. Temple. Certain political discussions are interspersed in these Essays, which may be the passages which excited Boswell's observations upon his correspondent's aptitude for such matters. In the *London Magazine* for December, 1777, of which we have seen Boswell says he was a proprietor, there is a review of these "Essays, Moral and Literary," which are described, in a style somewhat familiar to the readers of Boswell's "Letters," as "an agreeable collection of ingenious, concise essays, on a great variety of useful subjects, by some unknown writer, who seems to be well acquainted with the world, and yet unspoiled by the degeneracy of manners which at present universally prevails; he draws his maxims from the schools of wisdom and virtue, and sends them forth in search of literary fame, which we think they must acquire from the judicious and sober part of mankind." The same Work is reviewed with praise in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, December, 1777.

often pay to a book; I have therefore ordered another copy to be sent to him, with a card from me, to remind him. It is an erroneous report that he wrote the "European Settlements;" he told me he did not; a friend of his did, and he revised.

1*st May*, 1779, SOUTHILL, BEDFORDSHIRE.

I began this letter at the literary *head-quarters* in the Poultry: I am now at Southill, to which place Mr. Charles Dilly has accompanied; it is the house of Squire John Dilly, his elder brother. The family of Dilly have been land-proprietors in this county for two hundred years, but have lately changed their ancient inheritance, lying in the midst of Lord Torrington's estate, for another estate belonging to his Lordship.

I am quite the great man here, and am to go forward on the North road tomorrow morning. Poor Mr. Edward Dilly is fast a-dying; he cried with affection at seeing me here; he is in as agreeable a frame as any Christian can be; repeats the second paragraph of Dr. Young's second Night, "Why start at death?" etc., and another passage, "Death, a subterraneous road to bliss," or some such words. I am edified here.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, 8*th May*, 1779.

I got into the fly at Buckden, and had a very good journey. An agreeable young widow nursed me, and supported my lame foot on her knee. *Am I not fortunate in having something about me that interests most people at first sight in my favour?* I am to rest here till Monday, when I hope to get home to my wife and

children. I never wished so warmly to see them again as I do at present. What a pleasing attraction after quitting London!

You ask me about Lowth's "Isaiah"; I never once heard it mentioned till I asked Dr. Johnson about it, who said he could give no opinion about it himself, as he had not read it, but he was told it was a great work for those that love that kind of learning. The second edition is not in octavo, so you had better wait. I do not think Lowth an engaging man; I sat a good while with him this last spring. He said Dr. Johnson had *great genius.* I give you this as a specimen of his talk, which seemed to me to be neither discriminating, pointed, nor animated; yet he certainly has much curious learning, and a good deal of critical sagacity. I put into his hands, at Sir Alexander Dick's desire, the first Book of a British Georgic, which the worthy and amiable Knight has been for some time past (after seventy-three) amusing himself in composing; it is blank-verse precepts [I am now writing, or rather going to write, at Newcastle, Sunday, 9th May]—on agriculture and gardening, interspersed with political reflections and complimentary characters. You cannot imagine how fond he is of this work. There are in it very good things, and sometimes tolerable lines, but he really is not a poet. He said that for some time he intended it only for his son and a few friends, but I have perceived the wish of publication gradually springing from the root, which has, I take it, been all along in his mind. He even desired I should show it to Strahan, which was a strong indication of what he flattered himself would be *encouraged* by his friends. I evaded his inclination, laying hold of what he declared as to his intending his Georgic only for his son and his descendants, and telling him that to show it to

Strahan, who, as poor Garrick said, was an *obtuse man*, would be like showing family furniture to an auctioneer, and that the critical remarks of Lowth would be quite sufficient. Lady Dick was very uneasy lest he should publish it; last year I left a part of it with Dr. Armstrong. I was curious to see how he would bring himself off with Sir Alexander, in giving his opinion of what his friend exhibited to him as poetry, but which he knew not to come under that species of composition. He did very well; he wrote. It has the best part of poetry, "good sense, without which all poetry is little better than nonsense; but I wish you would give us something *de temperamentis*, for which you must have made collections." Here he made a fine transition to Sir Alexander's skill in physic, not acknowledging, however, in his friend what he states in his poem on health,—

> "One power of physic, melody, and song."

The Bishop of London is in a scrape. I doubt if he will *se tirer d'affaire* as cleverly as Armstrong did.

> "I laugh to think how your unshaken Cato
> Will stand aghast while *unexpected prosing*
> Pours in upon him."

Dr. Johnson had not heard of Pearce's Sermons, which I wondered at, considering that he wrote all the Life published by the Chaplain Derby, except what his Lordship wrote himself. I daresay you may buy any performance by Pearce, without any recommendation, and be pretty sure of being pleased. I have not looked at Gibbon's defence, and I hear nothing of the publication of his second volume. *He is an ugly, affected, disgusting fellow, and poisons our literary*

Club to me. I did not know Monboddo's new book, "The Metaphysics of the Ancients," had been advertised. I expect it will be found to be a very wonderful performance. I think I gathered from a conversation with him, that he believes the "Metempsychosis." Voltaire! Rousseau! I don't hear of new editions of them.

Your gentle reproof for not answering your letters exactly, I feel to be very just. I think Dr. Johnson never answered but three of my letters,* though I have had numerous returns from him. Have I not now answered all yours to which I was indebted?

As to your book, now that I have read it over, I must candidly tell you that I think you should not puzzle yourself with political speculations more than I do;† neither of us is fit for that sort of mental labour. Mind your health, your temper, your fortune, your wife and children, and, above all, your duties as a clergyman. But public matters will be better conducted, or at least as well as we can suggest. Your letters to me, and your cursory remarks on authors in the Green Book, are in my opinion so much better than the College-like sentences your book contains, that I have a fresh proof how very few of those who have good parts are fit for the study, far less the practice, of government. You are an agreeable companion in a postchaise, but by no means fit to be a driver.

* This comparison here to be inferred seems to run somewhat thus:—Temple : Boswell : : Boswell : Johnson; not a very flattering position for Mr. Temple! That part of the letter, too, which contains criticisms and advice to Temple is conceived very much in the Johnsonian style, and resembles in some parts the advice which his revered friend sometimes preached to Boswell for his edification.

† See *ante*, p. 194, note.

We should cultivate the excellent principle of *submission* for the Lord's sake. *

The following letter, which although not from Boswell's pen, had been preserved in the present collection, may be properly here inserted, especially as it refers to Boswell, and contains a genuine tribute to his character.

From a Friend to Mr. Temple.

At the Earl of Findlater's, Cullen House, Scotland,
3rd November, 1779.

I have been negligent, my dear Temple, but not forgetful of you; Boswell has, I hope, told you so long ago. The journey hither was performed so slow, that, though we left London 4th August, we did not arrive here till 21st September. You know the Coldstream road to Edinburgh, the nakedness of the Borders, and the fine situation of the capital of Scotland, with the richness and beauty of its environs. I saw Boswell several times: his friendly, obliging disposition atones for all that is not quite as one would wish in him; he showed me (not ostentatiously, but at my desire) some letters of his friend Dr. Johnson, which do the Doctor more honour, in my opinion, than any of his writings; for they prove that, whatever ruggedness, or even brutality there may be in his manners, he possesses a warm and good heart, capable of receiving and retaining the most lively impressions of friendship. That which he has for Boswell is as tender as it is sincere. I saw likewise, half-an-hour,

* The rest of the letter is missing; but, judging from the commencement of this passage preserved here, the loss need not render the reader inconsolable.

at his own house, Dr. Robertson. It is impossible to judge properly of a nervous man, who talks broad Scotch, from such an interview, especially as I must confess I took a little prejudice againt him for blaming Mason's publication, for not seeming to relish Gray's letters and for saying that when he saw Mr. Gray in Scotland he gave him the idea of a person who meant *to pass for a very fine gentleman*. Except this, which was not quite polite to me, he was very much so. He said he had written one hundred and fifty more pages of the "History of America," when the present disturbances stopped his pen. I am told that he shines most in his public speeches. When a sour and a blind zeal, which is wonderful even in Scotland in this age, opposed and defeated the reasonable mitigation of laws, dictated by bigotry against the Catholics, he, I am told, distinguished himself by pronouncing a very fine oration in their favour, in the General Assembly, at the peril of his life, for his house was afterwards beset by the deluded and furious mob.

From Edinburgh we went to Hopton House, a proper summer palace for a King of Scotland, if there were one, situated on the edge of the Frith of Forth, whose glittering tide divides it from a landscape of towns, villages, country-houses, wood, and farms, held up to view on a rising coast. [Here some local description follows, which may be omitted : he refers also to Mr. Henry (Lord) Kaime's skill in making fruitful land out of morass. Of the owner he thus speaks.] He himself has, at eighty-three, the vivacity of twenty-three, and can walk seven miles without fatigue. He is entertaining, good-humoured, and possessed of an infinite variety of knowledge which he produces in a flighty manner, entirely unlike the dull prose of most of his countrymen.

If you pardon my long silence, and wish to have a slight account of the rest of our journey, and of this place, do me the pleasure of telling me so, and I promise you your letter shall not remain long unanswered. Adieu for the present, and believe me to be unalterably

Yours,

N. N. R.*

* The name of the writer of this letter is not known.

CHAPTER XII

1780–1781

Journey to Edinburgh—Dean Smith—Mr. Falconer—Stay at Chester—Lord Monboddo's Metaphysics—Boswell's position and difficulties—Bishop Hurd—Happiness and knowledge—David Boswell—His character—Speculations on human misery and personal prospects—Nicholas M'Laurin—Story of an ordination in the last century—Archbishop Drummond—Dr. Boswell.

66] EDINBURGH, *4th January*, 1780.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Again an unaccountable cessation of our correspondence! but it would be foolish to employ a single sentence about such a mental *défaillance* as both of us have so often experienced.

From London, after an excellent fortnight there, I accompanied Colonel Stuart to Chester, to which town his regiment was ordered from Leeds, and there I passed another fortnight in mortal felicity. I had from my earliest years a love for the military life, and there is in it an animation and relish of existence which I have never found amongst any other set of men, except players, with whom you know I once lived a great deal. At the Mess of Colonel Stuart's regiment I was quite *the great man*, as we used to say; and I was at the same time all joyous and gay. Such was my home at Chester. But I had the good fortune to be known to the Bishop, who is one of the most distinguished prelates for piety and eloquence, and one

of the most pleasing men in social life, that you can imagine. His palace was open to me, morning, noon, and night; and I was liberally entertained at his hospitable board. At Chester too I found Dean Smith, the translator of Longinus, with whom you and I were so well acquainted, when we were studying under Mr. John Stevenson. I was surprised to find him, for I somehow had imagined that he was an ancient English author, comparatively speaking. He is very old, but is quite cheerful and full of anecdotes. He lives very retired, with a disagreeable wife, and they told me I was the only man who had been in the deanery for a long time. I found too at Chester Mr. Falconer, a gentleman of fortune and extraordinary learning and knowledge, who is preparing a new edition of Strabo, at the desire of the University of Oxford: he was exceedingly obliging to me. But I must not give you a transcript of my Chester Journal, which contains one of the most agreeable portions of my existence. The curiosity of the town itself, and the beauty of its environs, entertained me. It is the winter residence of a great many genteel families. It has a Theatre Royal and a very elegant Assembly-room. I never found myself so well received anywhere. The young ladies there were delightful, and many of them with capital fortunes. Had I been a bachelor, I should have certainly paid my addresses to a Chester lady.

Since my return home, I was seized with a severe cold, which was very general here, and was confined some days to bed, and a week to the house. Your last letter was a comfort to me in my indisposition; and indeed I should have sooner acknowledged the favour. I have been all this Session troubled with lameness, from an inconsiderable cause, the nail of one

of my great toes having grown into the flesh and inflamed it. I am at present confined by it, our first surgeon having undertaken to cure.

I wish I could give you any satisfactory account of my studies. I have done little at Greek. Lord Monboddo's "Ancient Metaphysics," which I am reading carefully, helps me to recover the language; but he is not an agreeable writer. His conversation is full of learning, but by much too odd and positive and *acharné* against modern manners. I really think my "Hypochondriac"* goes on wonderfully well. But how inconsiderable are both you and I, in comparison with what we used to hope we should be! Yet your learning and your memoirs set you far above the common run of educated men. And *Son pittore anche io.* I too, in several respects, have attained to superiority. But we both want solidity and force of mind, such as we observe in those who rise in active life.

My mind is at present in a state of tranquillity, or rather good insensibility. I have neither elevation nor gaiety; but I am easy. My father was this winter seized with a fever: his pulse was at ninety-five, and he was in danger; but he has recovered wonderfully, and is now as well as he has been for several years. But he is sadly influenced by his second wife; and I cannot interfere, however galling it is to see him estranged from me and my family.

My wife's nephews stood so much in need of my assistance, that I have advanced between seven and eight hundred pounds for them, which I have borrowed at five per cent. A demand is now made upon

* Essays published in the *London Magazine* under this title, and which have been referred to elsewhere in enumerating Boswell's works.

me which I must answer in February; and I must by no means inform my father. May I beg of you, my dearest friend, to remit me £200, for which I will send you my Bill. Pray do it, if you possibly can, for I am sadly put to it. If you can lodge a credit for me in London, it will do. I am sure, from our mutual confidence, you will do what you can; and pray write by return of post. I shall soon write to you again.

Ever yours most warmly,

J. B.

67] AUCHINLECK, *3rd September*, 1780.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—To bed I will not go tonight till I have written to you,—if not a whole letter, at least a good part of one; for indeed it is with wonder and regret that I think of so many days having elapsed without my thanking you for your two letters, after your return from your jaunt of disappointment. What unaccountable indolence seizes me at times! We put off from day to day the writing to a most intimate friend, yet in the midst of all this procrastination how much do we do that might be left undone.

I was much disappointed that you did not come to me last summer, as I expected, and worthy Johnston joined with me; but by the accounts which you give, I must pity you for the uneasiness which you have suffered. Well can I figure, my dear friend, your restlessness and vexation, first in London and then in Cambridge. But I cannot help thinking you in the wrong, when you complain that you could not study in London; for in my opinion a man may pursue any literary inquiry there with the utmost advantage in every respect. In London I suppose we may find

every book that can be found anywhere,* and one is as much master of his time there as it is possible to be; so that I conclude your not studying in London was owing to some indisposition in your mind or body. Your want of modern books at Cambridge was a *real* hindrance. Often do I upbraid and look down upon myself, when, in comtemplation of the heights of learning to which one may attain, I view my own inferiority, and think how much many others, and amongst them you, Temple, are above me. Yet on the other hand, when I consider what vexations you suffer, from which I am free, I am inclined to quiet myself. Much study is a weariness to the flesh," says the wise man; now, if there is on the whole more pain than pleasure in advancing far into literature, would you advise me to do it?

I am glad that you had two agreeable interviews with Hurd; but I do not understand that you dined with him. Should not a Bishop be given to hospitality? I hope to see your journal that you kept; you shall see all my volumes when you come to Scotland. Let us resolve that, if God is pleased to allow us life and health, we shall without fail have a meeting in London next Spring. I am sorry that, like myself, you have not the art of economy, so as to be laying up something handsome every year, when your income is, as I suppose, £500 a year. All I shall say as to your small debt to me is, that a remittance of it to me in my present situation, whenever you can easily spare the money would be an *aid*. Now, Temple, take care, I am not dunning you; I am writing with a candid frankness to my most intimate friend, who, when his

* Alas! three-quarters of a century since this was written, the search for Mr. Temple's publications [with the exception of the "Essay on the Clergy"] at the British Museum has proved vain. [A set may be seen in the University Library at Cambridge.]

fortune was diminished by his generosity to his father, offered to let me have a loan of £1000 to purchase a Commission in the Guards. Oh, my friend! let there never be the least reserve or possibility of misunderstanding between us. And now good night!

4th September.—I am just got up, and offered up my prayers to God, and read a chapter of the New Testament; I resume my letter to you. Drowsiness has hung heavy upon me last night, when I was willing to suppose more pain than pleasure in advancing far into literature. Men of delicate nerves may at times suffer from their knowledge, but they would suffer from something else, and even their enjoyments from knowledge counterbalance their sufferings. And it is to be hoped that a period is coming when they will have a more full relish of their intellectual acquisitions. And men of sound and vigorous minds have high satisfaction in their knowledge. Dr. Johnson maintains that a man is truly happy in proportion to his knowledge. I myself, who know so little, can judge from experience of the pleasure of knowledge from what I do know. What must be the pleasure of some men, whose enlarged minds and retentive memories possess large extensive funds of various knowledge, provided they have vivacity enough to enjoy it!

EDINBURGH, *November* 3, 1780.

Only think, my dear friend, of this letter's being begun on the 3rd of September, continued a little on the 4th of that month, and now going to be concluded (as I hope at least it will) on the 3rd of November; so that it has lain and travelled in its imperfect state, or rather its incipient state, two months all but one day. I know you will forgive this, though you must regret it, as I do most sincerely.

My brother arrived at Edinburgh on the 12th June, and lodged in my house. We went to Auchinleck in August, and were four weeks there with our father. David and I then returned to Edinburgh, where he staid with us a few days, after which he went to London, and is now settling himself there as a merchant and banker. He is a sensible, intelligent, accurate man, very formal and very prudent; in short, as different from me in his manner, and in his general way of thinking, as you can suppose. But I trust he is a man of good principles. He was very happy in the romantic scenes of Auchinleck, and he thinks highly of London; but he is steady to business and his own interest, and no amusements will divert him from essential advantage. I hope he will do well in London. He says he will probably never make a great fortune because he will not be adventurous; but he will get what he can by assiduity and economy. He told me that soon after settling in Spain he gave up all philosophizing, and applied himself to real business. He says he found out that men who speculate on life, as you and I do, are not successful in substantial concerns. He is in the right, I am afraid. If you have money matters to transact in London, I beg you may employ him. Write to him under cover, to Dilly, till he gives you an address.

The subject of speculating brings to my mind the difficulty, never to be resolved in this state of being, which you mention in the first of your two letters before me. Could not infinite wisdom and goodness have made us less miserable, if not more happy? We must be content to

"Wait the great teacher, Death, and God adore!"

It is to me clear, *a priori*, that your question may



JAMES BOSWELL

Engraved by F. HOLL, *from a sketch by*
Sir THOS. LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

be answered in the affirmative, supposing us to be such machines as the fatalists mention; but as I think it nobler to be a free agent, struggling as we must from some sad, mysterious causes, I comfort myself with the Christian revelation of our being in a state of purification, and that we shall in course of time attain to felicity. It is delightful, Temple, to look forward to the period when you and I shall enjoy what we now imagine. In the meantime let us be patient, and do what good we can.

I could not help smiling at the expostulation which you suggest to me, to try with my father. It would do admirably with some fathers; but it would make mine much worse, for he cannot bear that his son should talk with him as a man. I can only lament his unmelting coldness to my wife and children, for I fear it is hopeless to think of his ever being more affectionate towards them. Yet it must be acknowledged that his paying £1000 of my debt some years ago was a large bounty. He allows me £300 a year. But I find that what I gain by my practice and that sum together will not support my family. I have now two sons and three daughters. I am in hopes that my father will augment my allowance to £400 a year. I was indeed very imprudent in expressing my extreme aversion to his second marriage; but since it took place, I am conscious of having behaved to himself and his lady with such respectful attention and imposed such a restraint upon myself, as is truly meritorious. The woman is very implacable, and I imagine it is hardly possible that she can ever be my friend: she however behaves much better to the children than their grandfather does. We are all to dine at my father's to-day: he is better now than he has been for several years.

Your counsel to me to set my mind at rest, and be content with promotion in Scotland is, I believe, very wise. My brother David enforced it earnestly. If my father lives a few years longer, *age* will, I suppose, fix me here without any question ; for to embark in a new sphere, when one is much after forty, is not advisable. Yet, my dear Temple, ambition to be in Parliament, or in the Metropolis, is very allowable. Perhaps my exalted notions of public situation are fallacious ; for I begin to think that true elevation is to be acquired from study and thinking, and that when one is used to the most eminent situations they become familiar and insipid, and perhaps vexatious. David says, my chief object should be the augmenting, improving, and beautifying Auchinleck ; and that I may do all that to more advantage by having a smaller income in Scotland than a larger in London. We must see what time will present. There is a fine *fame* in being distinguished in London, were it only in literary society as I am ; and I could educate my children to great advantage there. What are your studies at present? What are you writing? I must again and again renew my wish for the publication of your *Green Book*. It must no doubt have many additions since I saw it. Short, elegant characters of books are to me *most* engaging, next to characters of men, and yours pleased me exceedingly.

Nichols was some days here, on his way home. His foppery is unbecoming in a clergyman. But I was really much offended with him one night, when he supped with me. M'Laurin, who, I fear, is an infidel, was the only other person in company. Nichols gave a ludicrous account of his ordination, said he applied to the Archbishop of York (Drummond), who asked him what books he had read on divinity. "Why

truly, my Lord," said he, "I must tell you frankly,—none at all, though I have read other books enough." "Very well," said the Archbishop, "I'll give you a letter to one who will examine you properly." Accordingly he got a letter to a clergyman in London, who examined him; and, to cut short this disagreeable story, Nichols said that he did not well understand what was meant, when desired to write on the necessity of a Mediator; that he wrote some strange stuff, as fast as he would do a card to a lady; and that he had never read the Greek New Testament. He made a very profane farce of the whole. M'Laurin laughed exceedingly. I could only be grave; for if I had argued on the impropriety of the story, the matter would have been made worse, while they were two to one. Now, my dear friend, I do not believe, in the first place, that the Archbishop would be so shamefully unfaithful to his awful trust. If he had been so, it was dishonourable in Nichols to tell. Upon either supposition Nichols was avowing himself a cheat. Neither could it be true that he was so grossly ignorant as he alleged he was. I shall never receive him again into my house. What I have now told you happened on a Saturday night. I called on him next day to have talked to him of it, but did not find him. I sent on Monday morning to know if he was gone, that I might still see; he was just stepping into the postchaise to set out for his Living. Perhaps it was as well that I did not see him. You know I speak pretty strongly. And why should I take any concern about him?

It pleases me that you express concern for the death of my poor uncle Dr. Boswell. He was a very good scholar, knew a great many things, had an elegant taste, and was very affectionate; but he had no conduct. His money was all gone. And, do you know,

he was not confined to one woman. He had a strange kind of religion; but I flatter myself he will be ere long, if he is not already, in Heaven.

The state of the nation is indeed wretched, nor do I see any prospect of our being better. It is shocking to think that a new Parliament is returned, which will be as subservient to Ministry as the last. I agree with you sincerely, my friend, that it would be better to be a Lord of Session, with an unblemished character, than a Peer and Lord Chief Justice by such means as these promotions have been attained. I would not have been one of those who rejected the petitions from America,—no, not for half the British Empire. Yet I am a Tory still, for I distinguish between our limited Monarch and a despotic Ministry.

I again can only express hopes of studying. I would fain recover Greek, or indeed learn it, for I never had much. Our Session approaches: I shall then be harassed with unimportant business. *Qui fit Mæcenas* must ever occur to us. I should think you might be very happy with so good an income, the sacred duties of your profession, and the studies which you can follow with so much success. I enjoyed extraordinary good spirits till yesterday. I am afraid a fit of hypochondria is come, and that it may last some time.*

* The reader will perhaps recollect a letter of Dr. Johnson's to Boswell (March 14th, 1787) which he printed in the "Life," and where the Doctor says, "I hoped you had got rid of all the hypocrisy of misery," and denounces his "affectation of distress." However, it is by no means improbable, as has been mentioned [in the original Introduction], though Dr. Johnson refused to credit it, that, if not constitutionally disposed to hypochondria, yet after drinking and excessive excitement Boswell was subject to great depression, which, as was natural to him, he paraded as an important constitutional phenomenon, and elevated to the dignity of hypochondria.

Pray let me hear from you oftener. My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to your young family. Let us be pleased we are both very well. So adieu!

Most affectionately yours,

J. B.

CHAPTER XIII

1781–1789

Interval in correspondence—Death of Boswell's father—Boswell in difficulties—Death of Dr. Johnson—"Tour to the Hebrides"—Boswell comes to London—Borrows money—A companion and governess in 1788—Christ's Hospital—"Life of Johnson"—Dissipation and despondency—Illness of Boswell's wife—Takes a house in Queen Anne Street West—No prospect at Westminster Hall—Malone's assistance—Archbishop's dinner to Judges and Counsel—Becomes candidate for his county.

FROM the 3rd of September 1780, to the fifth of January 1787, no further letters have been preserved. During this interval several important events affecting Mr. Boswell occurred. One of these was the death of his father, in the year 1782. Upon this occasion it was that, writing to Boswell, Dr. Johnson made the distinction between a kind and fond father. "Kindness, at least actual, is in our power, but fondness is not; and if by negligence or imprudence you had extinguished his fondness, he could not at will rekindle it. Nothing then remained between you but mutual forgiveness of each other's faults, and mutual desire of each other's happiness." He adds also a very valuable suggestion—unfortunately useless—that it should now be Mr. Boswell's "first care not to be in any man's debt."

In December of the year 1784 died Dr. Johnson, who, notwithstanding many other idolatries to which Boswell addicted himself from time to time, remained the chief object of his worship. Henceforth, instead of collecting materials, Boswell began to prepare them for publication,—a labour requiring great industry, which indeed, in spite of failing health, he freely

exercised. The very following year (1785) his first experiment on the Biography was tried, and he published the "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," which we have seen he had long been anxious to give to the public; and thus commenced the permanent association of his name with that of Dr. Johnson.

He was able now to carry out another great object of his ambition—that of coming to London to enrol himself at the English Bar. As we shall presently see, however, this step did not aid him in making the figure he had hoped.*

Boswell also entered into political strife in 1789, and proposed to enter into a contest for the representation of "his County." He did not, however, succeed in gaining the object of his ambition.

68] LONDON, *5th January*, 1787.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—By what channel I know not, farther than the penny-post, I received this morning, before I got out of bed, your last very affecting letter. Business called me into the City, and I returned with intention to write to you: but Sir Joshua Reynolds has, I find, invited me to dine at his house at four, with the Laureate, who is just come to town, and I cannot resist; so I can only assure you of my sincerest sympathy and prayers, ineffectual as I may fear they are. I have regretted that I was not acquainted with my amiable godson. Perhaps I should *now* be thankful; yet when my mind is firm, as it is at present, I feel a solid confidence in the Divine wisdom, with a humble waiting "for the great teacher, Death."

You shall hear from me soon again; and I beg you may write frequently, under cover of Mr. Courtenay. Be comforted, my old and most intimate friend, with pious hope, and be assured of the unceasing and warm regard of your truly affectionate

JAMES BOSWELL.

* See Letter, *post*, p. 304; January 10th, 1789.

A prophecy that the forthcoming "Life of Johnson" should be the most perfect piece of biography which the world has seen is boldly made by Boswell in the following letter, and time has seen it fulfilled.

69] LONDON, *Sunday, 24th February*, 1788.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I was yesterday enabled, by your friendship, to keep my credit entire, in a place where any suspicion against it is very fatal. David will send you my note, which is all the security that is necessary in such a transaction. You need be under no sort of apprehension as to the sudden demand of the £630; for though the Will should be set aside (which I do not fear) it must be by a tedious suit in Chancery; and you may depend upon your advance to me being repaid long before you could have occasion for the money in that event.

As to your niece, it is very natural for you to imagine that what you affectionately and laudably wish is practicable, nay easy. But in a calm conversation with Miss Palmer, with whom I went to breakfast, on purpose to talk with her on the subject, I found that to get your niece into the situation of a companion and governess is precisely the most difficult thing that can be figured. Sir Joshua, who was by, and has always good sense and observation, lent a word, and said, "a companion must be one whom one chooses from one's own knowledge. Nobody says to another, Get me a companion." Then, said Miss Palmer, so many accomplishments are necessary in a governess, that probably this young woman would not answer; and were she to take the mode which is frequently tried, of getting into a boarding-school as what is called a half-boarder, to become qualified as a teacher, she probably might not find an elegible situation; because, except

in some of the very great families, a governess is treated little better than a common servant. You see then, my friend, how a scheme, which you and I, in the warmth of simplicity (which I think will for ever mark our characters,) might think could be realised speedily, is in fact almost hopeless. My wife told me that a lady of pretty good fortune here, who is her relation and mine, told her that she sent her daughter to a boarding-school, because she could not afford to keep a second table for a governess, and she could not bear to have governess sit at table with her husband and her. In Scotland I know they are better treated, and perhaps in the country in England. However it appears to me that what you wish for your niece can be attained only in the North, where her connections are, and where her accent would not be an objection, as it certainly would be here; or, by your taking her for some time into your own family, and by degrees getting her recommended to some agreeable situation in the West, through your means.

As to your nephew, whom you wish to get into Christ's Hospital, honest David (who, at the same time that he is accurate and strict as to his own rights and his own agreements, is truly active in serving his friends) has already brought me a list of the Governors, so many of whom, marked with asterisks, have a right (about once in two years) to present a boy, not a son of a freeman of London; and amongst them I find Alderman Clark, who was a friend of Dr. Johnson's, to whom I shall apply; and our friend Mr. Wilkes, to whom both you and I may apply. But what I really think will be the most probable means of attaining to what I find is an object of much competition, is for you to get Mr. and Mrs. Gwathen [Gwatkin] to interest Sir Joshua Reynolds to ask it of Alderman Boydell, the

great printseller and patron of artists, who, either himself, or by means of some other Governor, may get it done. As I have too often seen how applications are civilly received, but without effect, Sir Joshua must be prevailed on to urge it—to *make a point* of it.

I have not yet had a message from Mr. Railton, though he took down my address, and promised we should meet when he had looked over the letters and papers on Mr. Forster's affairs. If he and I differ as to the right to the £250 legacy, I really think that the opinion of an experienced counsel should be taken, but without letting it be known; and if it be for your sister, let her stand a suit. If not, let her trust to the generosity of the creditors.

So much for business. Does it not strike you how frequent our letters are when that is the case, compared with those periods when we have only friendly reciprocation and literary correspondence?—a proof how man is intended for solid realities, more than the more pleasing and more amiable objects of the heart and the fancy; yet surely intellectual business may be considered to be as real as anything whatever.

Mason's Life of Gray is excellent, because it is interspersed with letters which show us the *man*. His Life of Whitehead is not a life at all, for there is neither a letter nor a saying from first to last. I am absolutely certain that my mode of biography, which gives not only a *History* of Johnson's *visible* progress through the world, and of his publications, but a *view* of his mind in his letters and conversations, is the most perfect that can be conceived, and will be more of a Life than any work that has ever yet appeared.

I have been wretchedly dissipated, so that I have not

written a line for a fortnight; but today I resume my pen, and shall labour vigorously. I am now in strong, steady spirits, which make me confident, instead of being in despondency. Oh, my friend, what can be the reason of such depression as we often suffer? I am very, very uneasy, on account of the state of my affairs. When you come we will consult. Now I charge you to be determined in coming instantly after Easter. Hurd does not [publish?] his Life of Warburton, though it is written, but *

Adieu, my dear friend.

Yours affectionately,

J. B.

My wife is, I thank God, much better; but is it not cruel to keep her in this pernicious air, when she might be so much better at Auchinleck? But *come, come, come!* Upon my honour, if it be possible that you disappoint me another year, I shall believe you immersed in money-making. Oh, my friend! let us have some more comfortable hours in our own old way. On Saturday Sir Joshua, Miss Palmer, Mr. Malone, Mr. Langton, dined with us; Courtenay was taken ill and could not come, though engaged.

70] LONDON, 10*th January*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Another sad interruption of our correspondence, without any sufficient reason. Soon after receiving your last, long, kind letter, I recovered my spirits pretty well, I know not how. A letter from my wife, recommending me to take a house in a well-aired situation, determined me not to sell my

* The rest of the letter is illegible.

furniture; as my doing so, after what she wrote, might appear like discouraging her from coming to me, which, though I could hardly hope, would have made me very happy. It is incredible what difficulty I found, in several weeks' wandering, to find a house that would answer; and at last I fixed on one at £50, in Queen Anne Street West, Cavendish Square, very small but neat. It however would not accommodate the whole of my family, with even tolerable conveniency, but would serve as a sort of camp-lodging till better could be had. In winter, the upholsterers and brokers take numbers of houses and furnish them with old trash, and by letting them furnished get great profits. This makes it very difficult to get choice of unfurnished houses at that season. I am in a most *illegal* situation, and for appearance should have cheap chambers in the Temple, as to which I am still inquiring. But in truth I am sadly discouraged by having no practice, nor probable prospect of it; and to confess fairly to you, my friend, I am afraid that, were I to be tried, I should be found so deficient in the forms, the *quirks* and the *quiddities*, which early habit acquires, that I should expose myself. Yet the delusion of Westminster Hall, of brilliant reputation and splendid fortune as a barrister, still weighs upon my imagination. I must be seen in the Courts, and must hope for some happy openings in causes of importance. The Chancellor, as you observe, has not done as I expected; but why did I expect it? I am going to put him to the test. Could I be satisfied with being Baron of Auchinleck, with a good income for a gentleman in Scotland I might, no doubt, be independent. But what can be done to deaden the ambition which has ever raged in my veins like a fever? In the country, I should sink into wretched gloom, or at best into listless dullness

and sordid abstraction. Perhaps a time may come when I may by lapse of time be grown fit for it. As yet I really, *from a philosophical spirit*, allow myself to be driven along the tide of life with a good deal of caution, not to be much hurt; and still flattering myself that an unexpected lucky chance may at last place me so, that the prediction of a fortunate cap appearing on my head at my birth will be fulfilled.

My two boys are still in the house with me. The eldest is advancing both in Latin and Greek exceedingly well, by the assistance of one of the ushers of the Soho Academy; and the other goes on in Latin with him during this hard weather, but next week I am to send him again to that academy. I am sensible that it is a great disadvantage to them to be under my roof, as I am so much abroad; and then they must be with my Scotch housekeeper and footman, whom I yet retain on account of their fidelity *and moderate wages*, but I am afraid to send my eldest to a public school with his rupture; the younger I shall send to one when he is a year older.

I am now very near my rough draught of Johnson's Life. On Saturday I finished the Introduction and Dedication to Sir Joshua, both of which had appeared very difficult to be accomplished. I am confident they are well done. Whenever I have completed the rough draught, by which I mean the work without nice correction, Malone and I are to prepare one-half perfectly, and then it goes to press, where I hope to have it early in February, so as to be out by the end of May. I do not believe that Malone's Shakespeare will be much before me: his brother, Lord Sunderlin, with his Lady and two sisters, came home from a long tour on the Continent in summer last, and took a country-

house about twenty miles from town, for six months. Malone lived with them, and so his labour was much intermitted.

I am very sorry to find that it is the most difficult thing you can imagine, to get a boy, not the son of a citizen, into Christ's Hospital. Miss Palmer, whom I have solicited, cannot do it; and I am sure I have not a tenth part of that kind of interest which is required. You must think of something else for your nephew, and pray do not blame me if I recommend aiming at humble situations. It is impossible, in the nature of society, that every branch of every creditable family can have that preference to others from generation to generation.

As to the Archbishop of York I had a letter to him from Dr. Ball, one of his particular friends. He asked me to a private dinner; but a number of company came, and I had very little of his conversation, for he does not *show away in talk* at his table upon a Sunday. I was at the dinner which he gives in form to the Judges and Counsel on the Northern Circuit, and a splendid dinner it was; indeed his table is princely. In the evening, departing, he whispered to me, "Don't go, there's a bed for you." So I and Mr. Law, King's Counsel, whose brother is married to his Lordship's eldest daughter, stayed. His Lordship took me to walk with him through his delightful Seat and was quite easy: his conversation turned chiefly on British antiquities, in which he seemed to be deeply versed; and he said a good deal of Scotland, a considerable part of which he had seen some years ago. There is nothing of the pedagogue or the high-priest in his domestic behaviour: he is all affability, and even playfulness with his children. I believe I should leave a card at his door in town; I will do it.

As to my canvass in my own county, I started in opposition to a junction between Lord Eglintoun and Sir Adam Fergusson, who were violent opponents, and whose coalition is as odious there, as the *Great* One is to the nation. A few friends and real independent gentlemen early declared for me; three other noble lords, the Earls of Cassillis, Glencairn, and Dumfries, have lately joined and set up a nephew of the Earl of Cassillis. A Mr. John Whitefoord, who as yet stands as I do, will, I understand, make a bargain with this last alliance. Supposing he does, the two great parties will be so poised that I shall have it in my power to cast the balance. If they are so piqued that either will rather give the seat to me than be beaten by the other, I may have it. Thus I stand, and I shall be firm. Should Lord Lonsdale give me a seat he would do well, but I have no claim upon him for it.

General Paoli's steady kindness is indeed highly to be valued.

I have said nothing about the Regency, because you have it all in the newspapers. (Pray, which do you read?) Do you know I was at first carried away with the notion of the right having devolved to the Prince, and had almost written one of my very warm popular pamphlets for it;* but Lord Lonsdale having been taken ill with a feverish disorder, from which he is not yet quite free, so that I have not yet seen him for five weeks, so as to know his sentiments, I prudently refrained, and have become satisfied that I was wrong; for there is a King, though his faculties be suspended. Pitt has behaved very ill in his neglect of me. I now think Dundas a sad fellow in his private capacity; he has used honest David cruelly. I breakfasted today

* Referring probably to the two political "Letters to the People of Scotland" which had appeared five or six years before.

with Hawkins; he is, I believe, a good man, but mean for a man of his fortune. We depend on your coming to London in April or May; it will be impossible to bear another disappointment. Write soon to your ever affectionate

JAMES BOSWELL.

CHAPTER XIV

1789

Illness of Mrs. Boswell—Society of the Northern Circuit—Boswell "roasted"—"Quare Adhæsit Pavimento?"—Hawkins—Dr. Parr—Collects and publishes Warburton's juvenile works—Hurd—Public affairs—Pitt's ill-usage of Boswell—His wife—Barthélemy's "Voyage en Grèce"—Mœurs des Grecs—Story of an apparition—Courtenay—Sir John Hawkins—Jealousy of Dr. Johnson's biographers—Mrs. Boswell's illness increases—Dundas—Pitt's "folly"—Disappointment of Boswell—Boswell meditates an attack upon Pitt.

Boswell, it would seem, was now "hovering" about the legal quarters, not with great hopes of business, but in some expectation of a place which, as a barrister, he might hold. What were Boswell's feelings at Mr. Pitt's "unwise" conduct, in neglecting to meet Boswell's wishes, will be seen in the following letter.

Legal society, it is clear, had no great charm for Boswell. His was just the character which laid him open to Circuit satire, and the unsparing jocularity of the Bar mess. It is said, by those experienced in the subject, that when the members of some Circuits unbend in conviviality, and "mirth and jollity" take the place of grave argument and subtle advocacy, an uninitiated spectator would think that he had fallen into the society of collegians or even of schoolboys in disguise, and he would see the weaknesses and peculiarities of the different members treated with all the wit and freedom which are claimed to be exercised by the youthful and scholastic public. What were the particular points in the Circuit life of the last century which Boswell found so disagreeable to his feelings it would be impossible to inquire;

but doubtless the conceited, vain,* or presumptuous member would have found small sympathy there; and if such a one aspired to a position amongst his brethren of the Mess, which he could not successfully maintain, he would probably have to submit to mortifying joke and banter. One may also conclude perhaps, that deference to mere reputation and veneration for the adherent of fine society were never leading attributes of the Circuit Bar in their social hours. From whatever causes it may have arisen, Boswell at all events, on several occasions, expressed no great liking for the conduct of his professional brethren; and his entering himself at the English Bar contributed less to his pleasure and profit than even his Scotch practice.

The failing health of his wife, and his labours at his *magnum opus*, occupy for some time much of Boswell's anxious thoughts.

71] LONDON, *16th February*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I am longing much to hear from you. My wife has had a return of her asthmatic fever, but it has not continued so long, or with such alarming symptoms, as it did when it seized her the three last winters; but still you may imagine that I am not *easy*, being at this distance from her, and her state of health so uncertain. My eldest son advances exceedingly well both in Latin and Greek, under the private tuition of one of the ushers of the Soho Academy, to which my youngest now goes. I am resolved to send him, when he is twelve, either to Eton or Westminster. When you come we shall confer as to that question. My book is now very near the conclusion of the rough draft. I hesitate as to going the Spring Northern Circuit, which costs £50, and obliges me to be in rough, unpleasant company four weeks.†

* "Bumptious" is a term which the next edition of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary inevitably must contain.

† There can be no doubt, as has been hinted at in the beginning of the Chapter, that Boswell's peculiarities laid him open to be what

I wish to keep *hovering* as an English lawyer, for I much, much fear that now I should be more unhappy than ever in Scotland. Hawkins and I got into good social plight this winter; I dined at his house one day with the Hon. and Rev. William Stuart, and they dined at mine a few days after, and we were exceedingly well.

There is just come out a publication which makes a considerable noise, and which will interest you particularly. The celebrated Dr. Parr of Norwich, author of the extraordinary Preface to Bellendenus,* has—wickedly, shall we say?—but surely wantonly—collected and published Warburton's Juvenile Translations and Discourse on Prodigies, and Bishop Hurd's attacks on Jortin and Dr. Thomas Leland with his "Essay on the Delicacy of Friendship." The sheets will require ten franks, which would be too many at a time; they shall come gradually. By this post I send you Parr's two Prefaces and Dedication, in which you will find *ardentia verba* indeed, and uncommon keenness of severity to Hurd, such as cannot be justified unless great provocation has been given. Public affairs are in a very dubious situation. I really do believe the King will recover; and I am told that neither the Duke of

is termed "*roasted*" somewhat by the Circuit wits, who were, if tradition may be trusted, somewhat more "rough" in their humour than they are at the present day. Possibly also Boswell may have been thinking of the "motion," *quare adhæsit pavimento*, which he made in court, upon sham instructions emanating from the conviviality of the mess-table.

* It is in this preface that the "tria lumina Anglorum"—Lord North, Fox, and Burke—are bepraised. The republications mentioned above by Boswell were issued by Dr. Parr from his spite to Dr. Hurd. The literary and ecclesiastical scandals referred to in this letter will be found in the respective biographies of the worthy divines whose names are here connected with the disputation.

Portland nor Mr. Fox will accept of any part in an Administration which is not likely to be permanent. I begin now to think that whatever Administration should appoint you and me to good places would be the best. Lord Lonsdale is not yet out of his room, but I see his members are in opposition. Pitt (probably influenced by Dundas) has used me very ill; but I yet cannot relish the Coalition, especially that worthless minister, Lord North. *Nous verrons.*

Let me know when you are to be in town; remember it will not be possible to bear another disappointment. Lord Eliot is vastly well; we have dined together several times at the Literary Club, at Sir Joshua's, and at Mr. Metcalfe's. Why does not his Lordship keep house here? I am told that, like myself, though living in company, he is subject to depression of spirits, which makes any task, even that of entertainment of one's friends, a burden. I have had only one splendid dinner in my small house here, the Bishop of Killaloe, Sir Joshua, Windham, etc., etc.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to the children.

Ever most affectionately yours,

J. B.

72] LONDON, 10*th March*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—David has found a Bipontine Ammianus Marcellinus, in two volumes, but without notes. Let him know if he should buy it for you.

Since I wrote last, I have had two letters from my wife, which gave me rather better hopes; but by a letter which I have to-day from a relation, she is certainly very ill, having a severe cough, sweatings, and swelled legs. She has indeed had all these alarming

symptoms before, and has recovered; but frequent relapses make her situation more dangerous. I wait with anxiety for a letter from a physician to whom I have written to see her, as if on a visit of compliment (for she will not have one to attend her, thinking it of no use), and to send me a fair, explicit report. If he thinks her in immediate danger, I will go down directly, and take Veronica with me, and perhaps the two boys also, that she may be soothed with all the comfort they can give her, which she surely deserves, as she has been the most affectionate mother. You will perceive in what a state of mind I must be at present. Yet, as London is the best place when one is happy, it is equally so when one is the reverse; for the power of being at once wrapped up in undisturbed privacy, by not being personally known, and having an influx of various ideas, by being in the midst of multitudes, cannot fail to dissipate many a cloud which would thicken and augment and press upon the spirits in the country, or in a narrower place. This day, for instance, I shall rove about the cities of London and Westminster in the evening to contemplate the illuminations on his Majesty's recovery. General Paoli kindly entertains me and Veronica and my sons, and honest David, at dinner, and we shall thus be enlivened. Is it not true philosophy, my friend, to procure as much happiness, to make as much honey in life as we can? I mean, in consistency with all duties.

Should I be obliged to go to Scotland, you must delay your visit to town till I can meet you. An interview after so long an absence will be very valuable.

The General's carriage is to be here soon, so I must hasten to dress. I shall soon write to you as to the particulars in your last letters.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple. Long may she be a comfort to you! Love to your family.

I am ever

Most affectionately yours,

J. B.

73] LONDON, *5th March*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—For some days past I have been in such an anxious and distracted state, by the sad accounts that came to me of my wife's having had repeated returns of her distressing complaint, that I have not been able to answer your two last letters, for I had resolved to set out instantly for Auchinleck. Another letter from her, and one from my second daughter, who is with her, have made me a little easier, and I wait for further accounts, having written to her physician in the country to send me a fair and explicit state. It vexes me to think that I should appear neglectful of so valuable and affectionate a wife and mother, by being here; but God knows how sincerely and tenderly I regard her. The asthmatic complaints with which she is afflicted made it advisable for her to pass this winter in the country. I could not stay there without stopping what has already been delayed too long —the completion of my "Life of Johnson," and taking myself out of the great wheel of the Metropolis, from which I do hope that in time I shall have a capital prize.

Whatever then I at times may feel, my reason acquits me from any blame in this separation. Comfort and encourage me, my dear friend: you do it better than anybody. In your last long letter, you have poured balm upon my sore mind. I indeed must acknowledge that owing to the melancholy which ever

lurks about me, I am too dissipated, and drink too much wine. These circumstances I must restrain, as well as I can.

This is to be a short letter, of which you will be so good as to accept, till I am more at leisure and more calm.

I never look at the foreign publications, which I am sensible is wrong. Courtenay knows them all, I think. "Florier" is not worth your buying, nor "Joseph." Indeed all your "Abels," and such works, I should guess are fit only for milk-and-water minds. Barthélemy's "Voyage en Grèce," Courtenay says, is an admirable book. The Younger Anacharsis is supposed to travel through that celebrated country when at its best, and is made to give an account of whatever an intelligent traveller would observe, and this not fancifully, for the authorities of the most faithful writers are quoted at the bottom of the page. The Chevalier Ramsay has written his "Voyages de Cyrus" (which I have read) upon the same plan. David, with his usual activity and prudence, has both seen the book (which consists of several volumes, besides a volume of maps) and suggested that you should first be informed it is pretty dear,—under £3 however,—that you may consider. Courtenay commends much "Mœurs des Grecs," by Peur, the author of "Recherches sur les Américains." Will you have this too?

Your story of the apparition is, truly enough, "to give us pause." I myself am much inclined to believe it; I am never startled by the *why*, because that may be objected to thousands and thousands of facts which, in this world of mystery, we are *sure* have happened. Malone and Sir Joshua will not believe it; they very erroneously, I think, maintain that supposing the appearance, or imagination, or whatever

else it may be called, and also the corresponding death of Mr. Winyard, to be ascertained, there may have been only coincidence. Courtenay (though an unbeliever in our Revelation) admits that, if the two facts be ascertained, there may have been a supernatural influence; he lays much stress upon the officers at the Mess having laughed at Sherbrook and Winyard for months, as undoubted evidence that they saw the apparition at the time mentioned; but he requires proof that they were laughed at. It is well known how people exaggerate and vary accounts. Johnson taught me to cross-question in common life. I really think the story deserves to be thoroughly examined. Where is Winyard? Where are the officers who ridiculed him and Sherbrook at the Mess?

Adieu for the present, my dear Temple! I hold myself in readiness to set out for Scotland in case of worse accounts. *Why* is this melancholy circumstance in the lot of my *family? Cui bono?* I adore, and reverently wait for more light. Write to David about your books, in case I should be gone; but pray give me some kind communications. I like your sitting up and writing to me when your wife and daughter were at the assembly; we are not quite young now.

I ever am most affectionately yours,

J. B.

P.S.—Pray, by return of post help me with a word. In censuring Mr. J. Hawkins's book I say, "There is throughout the whole of it a dark, uncharitable cast, which puts the most unfavourable construction on my illustrious friend's conduct." Malone maintains *cast* will not do; he will have "malignancy." Is that not too strong? how would "disposition" do?

I have the pleasure to tell you that a part of my

magnum opus is now ready for the press, and that I shall probably begin to print next week. By all means call Lowther my patron. May he be so more and more!

Hawkins is no doubt very malevolent. *Observe how he talks of me as quite unknown.*

Between Sir John Hawkins and Boswell (although we have just seen that they dined at each other's houses and were ostensibly on good terms) there existed great jealousy; and Boswell's ill-feeling towards his rival is frequently exhibited in the "Life of Johnson." The passage cited in the above Postcript was retained in the book unaltered, and will be found at the commencement of the Biography.

With respect to Boswell's annoyance at Hawkin's talking of him as quite unknown, there is an anecdote related * which is a very proper pendant to his complaint, and which makes poor Boswell's position appear still more ridiculous.

"My father and Boswell," says Miss Hawkins, "grew a little acquainted; and when the Life of their friend came out, Boswell showed himself very uneasy under an injury which he was much embarrassed in defining. He called on my father, and, being admitted, complained of the manner in which he was enrolled amongst Johnson's friends, which was as 'Mr. James Boswell of Auchinleck.' Where was the offence? It was one of those which a complainant hardly dares to embody in words: he would only repeat, 'Well, but Mr. *James Boswell!* surely, surely, Mr. *James Boswell!*' 'I know,' said my father, 'Mr. Boswell, what you mean; you would have had me say, that Johnson undertook this tour with *The* Boswell.' He could not indeed absolutely covet this mode of proclamation; he would perhaps have been content with the 'the celebrated' or the 'well-known,' but he could not confess quite so much; he therefore acquiesced in the amendment proposed, but he was forced to depart without any promise of correction in a subsequent edition."

The Reader will remember, that, having attacked Sir John

* See anecdotes by Miss Hawkins in "Johnsoniana."

Hawkins in the beginning of the "Life," Boswell next proceeds to detract from another rival, Mrs. Piozzi.

It was this mutual jealousy of the rival biographers of Dr. Johnson, which formed the subject of Peter Pindar's burlesque entitled "Bozzy and Piozzi," a pair of twin Eclogues. It could not have tended to reconcile the various parties to these quarrels to read the bitter Peter's account of the disputes or the disputants. The lady and gentleman are, for example, thus cruelly introduced for the purpose of ridicule:

> "At length rushed forth two candidates for fame,
> A Scotchman one, and one a London dame;
> *That*, by the emphatic Johnson christened Bozzy;
> *This*, by the bishop's license, Dame Piozzi."

74] LONDON, *16th March*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Except joining with David in thinking that you had better wait a little longer and get Parr's publication for nothing, this letter is to be solely about the Apparition. Courtenay and Langton are just gone from me, after considering your very distinct and fair statement. Courtenay is very much impressed. He evades the story of Lord Lyttleton, by alleging that his Lordship grew more and more frightened as the predicted time approached, and in a panic swallowed some medical tincture so hastily as to be choked by it before his servant, who had stepped out of the room, was returned: as to that, I must inquire. Courtenay will be obliged to you if you can ascertain the day (for hour and minute are too precise) on which the appearance was seen by Sherbrook and Winyard. Was it perfectly recollected by the other officers to coincide with the very day of Winyard's brother's death? And Langton having suggested that it is possible there may be a *jesting* concert to have a regimental ghost, Courtenay also begs that you, in whose opinion he will have confidence, may, upon strict

attention, say if you have the least suspicion that the officers mean to join in such an imposition. For my own part, I have no difficulty in believing the story to be supernaturally true.

I am ever most affectionately yours,

J. B.

P.S.—Did I mention that the physician wrote to me that my wife was rather easier? But no letters for some days, and several dreams, distress me.

75] LONDON, 31*st March*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your last confirms me still more as to the story of the apparition. But I have not yet waited on Mr. Winyard; for, alas, my dear friend, I have received very alarming accounts of the distress which my wife suffers, both in a letter from the physician and in one from herself. Her expression is, "My fever still continues, and I waste away daily." I have been in wretched agitation since the day before yesterday, when such melancholy information reached me. It is possible that a return of mild weather may relieve her, as has happened several times; but we cannot be ignorant that each repeated attack makes her less able to recover; and supposing that now the disease should increase, and, as sometimes happens, should take a rapid course, she may be carried off while I am four hundred miles from her. The alternative is dreadful; and though she, with admirable generosity, bids me not be in a haste to leave London (knowing my extreme fondness for it), I should have a heart as hard as a stone were I to remain here; and should the fatal event happen in my absence, I should have a just upbraiding gloom upon my mind for the rest of my life. I have therefore resolved to set out

early, the day after to-morrow, and take Veronica with me. I do this with the entire approbation of Mrs. Stevenson, mistress of the boarding-school,* who said to me, "It is a case not to be reasoned upon." I would fain hope that the consolation and amusement of my company and that of our Queen Square daughter will, with the advance of the season, restore her to tolerable health; and then I shall return to town to go forward with my great work. In the meantime, as we have of late, my old and most intimate friend, corresponded more frequently, pray let us continue to do so. Your letters, under Mr. Garforth's cover, will be punctually forwarded. You *must* not on any account come to London till I am there to meet you, which I flatter myself will be about the middle of May. It is necessary for me, if possible, to be back by the 25th of May, to appear as Recorder of Carlisle in a Cause in the King's Bench. Pray let me have your fervent prayers for my wife's recovery. How much do I long to see you!

I unexpectedly met Nichols last Wednesday at a club at the Blenheim Tavern, Bond Street, of which I am an honorary member. We were civil to each other. I have not seen Jerningham's "Enthusiasm," but I shall look at it.

Do not tell worthy David that I mentioned particulars; but ask him, as from yourself, what they are: I having complained to you that Dundas has not behaved well to him. The fact is, on David's being obliged to quit Spain on account of the war, Dundas promised to my father that he would give him an office.

* This Queen Square boarding-school, which was at one time so fashionable and famous as to be termed the "Ladies' Eton," having survived for nearly a century, has been finally closed within the last year or two.

Some time after my father's death, Dundas renewed the assurance to me in strong terms, and told me he had said to Lord Caermarthen, "It is a deathbed promise, and I must fulfil it." Yet David has now been kept waiting above eight years, when he might have established himself again in trade, and, notwithstanding Dundas's exorbitant power, has got no employment, though he is an intelligent, accurate, worthy man, and has declared his willingness to accept of any situation in any department. This is cruel usage. The patient firmness with which David behaves is very respectable. He is right in persevering, so as to leave Dundas no excuse for not keeping his word.

As to myself, Dundas, though he *pledged himself* (as the modern phrase is) to assist me in advancing in promotion, and though he last year assured me, upon his honour, that my letter concerning the Scotch Judges had made no difference; yet, except when I in a manner compelled him to dine with me last winter, has entirely avoided me, and I strongly suspect has given Pitt a prejudice against me. The excellent Langton says it is disgraceful; it is utter folly in Pitt not to reward and attach to his administration a man of my popular and pleasant talents, whose merit he has acknowledged in a letter under his own hand. He did not answer several letters, which I wrote at intervals, requesting to wait upon him; I lately wrote to him that such behaviour to me was certainly not generous. "I think it is not just, and (forgive the freedom) I doubt if it be wise. If I do not hear from you in ten days, I shall conclude that you are resolved to have no farther communication with me; for I assure you, Sir, I am extremely unwilling to give you, or indeed myself, unnecessary trouble." About two months have elapsed, and *he has made no sign*. How can I

still delude myself with dreams of rising in the great sphere of life? I will tell you; Lord Lonsdale, who when he pleases, has great power in every Administration, shows me more and more regard; and Sir Michael Le Fleming, Governor Penn, and Colonel Lowther, three of his Members, assure me that he will give me a seat in Parliament at the General Election. I do not reckon upon this, but the *peut-être* is animating.

I cannot help thinking with you that Pitt is the ablest and most useful Minister of any of those whom we know; yet I am not sure that after the *pericula* which should give caution, others (and amongst them Burke, whom I visited yesterday, and found as ably philosophical in political disquisition as ever) might not do as well; and if he has treated me unjustly in his stewardship for the public, and behaved with ungrateful insolence to my *patron*, who first introduced him into public life, may I not warrantably arraign many articles, and great ones too, in his conduct, which I can attack with forcible energy? At present I keep myself quiet, and wait till we see how things will turn out. My candidateship in my own county is honourable, though I am between two great parties, either of which could overwhelm me, but perhaps may rather let me come in, by bringing me in apparently, than be defeated by its opponent. You will forgive me for all this egotism.*

You have not gratified me with a particular account of your young family, which pray do. I am vexed that I can see no way of obtaining the presentation to the Hospital for your nephew. Do you not think that the

* Those who are experienced in election manœuvres will be able to understand this passage; unless indeed Reformed Parliaments have rendered this corrupt science obsolete.

air of the west of England might do my wife good? but I fear she could not be persuaded to leave Auchinleck. How different are she and I! I was the *great man* (as we used to say) at the late Drawing-room, in a suit of imperial blue lined with rose-coloured silk, and ornamented with rich gold-wrought buttons. What a motley scene is life!

I leave my sons in the house here with the old housekeeper and my footman. I must send the eldest from home, for he begins to oppose me, and no wonder.

Adieu, my dear Temple! My best compliments to Mrs. Temple and all your family.

I am ever,

Most affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

CHAPTER XV

1789

Mrs. Boswell's case pronounced hopeless—Self-reproaches—Parliamentary aspiration—Chairman of Quarter-Sessions—Address to the Prince of Wales—"Conspicuousness"—Pitt—Death of Mrs. Boswell—Family plans—Electioneering—Visit to Lord Lonsdale—Strange loss of a wig—Gloomy condition of mind—Mysterious discovery of the wig—Malone revising the "Life of Johnson"—Sir Joshua Reynolds' blindness—Boswell's income—Visit to Eton—Progress of the "Life of Johnson."

THE illness from which Mrs. Boswell had been suffering terminated fatally during the absence of her husband. The following letters exhibit in curious contrast Boswell's grief, which was undoubtedly genuine, and the littlenesses and vanity which unfortunately formed part of his nature. The nineteen carriages, &c., following his wife's hearse certainly afforded the mourning husband no little satisfaction.

It will be seen how grievously Boswell's conscience reproaches him when he reflects on his convivial dissipation during his wife's illness. His penitence seems also not a little excited, when he remembers the inconvenience he experiences from spraining his shoulder through his intoxication.

The election struggles which Boswell engaged in were unsuccessful, and the only preferment he obtained through his friends was the Recordership of Carlisle. On the whole, this portion of Boswell's life is very melancholy: it is a record of domestic misfortunes, broken health, and disappointed ambition; he confesses that it has been, and still is, his great object, that his life should *tell*; but it is even now on the wane, and nothing yet done to give it celebrity. The "Life of Dr. Johnson," however, has still to be published.

76] LOWTHER, *22nd May*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Time and place should be indifferent to philosophy and friendship such as ours; yet what reason have you and I to arrogate to ourselves any superiority or peculiar excellence. Would it be allowed to us by others, upon a perusal of our correspondence?* I fear not. There is however a benignant principle in human nature, which disposes men in general to have an irresistible predilection for themselves, and all that is connected with them as participating of themselves. Every man has a particular regard for his own person, be it what it may, etc. etc. I need not expand the thought; you will at once see it in all its extent. This introduction arises from my being struck so as almost to laugh by myself, at the strangeness of my having delayed, I know not how, day after day, while at Auchinleck, to answer your truly kind letter of 26th April, and now sitting down here to do it when I am upon the wing.†

I found my dear wife as ill, or rather worse than I apprehended. The consuming hectic fever had preyed upon her incessantly during the winter and spring, and she was miserably emaciated and weak. The physician and surgeon apothecary, whom she allows occasionally, though rarely, to visit her, told me fairly, as to a man *able* to support with firmness what they announced, that they had no hopes of her recovery, though she might linger, they could not say how long, in distress,—nay, might again, as formerly, have a respite of comparative ease. Oh, my dear old friend, how shocking was this to me! Alas! instead of having a manly firmness, I am more weak and effeminate in

* This question the reader is now in a position to answer.

† The sequence of Boswell's ideas in this paragraph is not very obvious.

mind than the valuable woman herself. Added to her other complicated complaints, she has for some time had a most afflicting acidity in her stomach, so that she has no good digestion, but everything that she eats and drinks becomes quite acid, and thus she can receive very little sustenance; and the acrimony is such as to corrode and blister her tongue. I never knew any one in greater distress, except one gentleman, who died of that dreadful disorder a cancer.

She goes out an airing in the carriage every day, which for about three hours gives her some relief; and when her attention is taken off herself by family affairs, nay by the affairs of my estate, to both of which she is still wonderfully alive, she seems to be a good deal better. No man ever had a higher esteem or a warmer love for a wife than I have for her. You will recollect, my Temple, how our marriage was the result of an attachment truly romantic; yet how painful is it to me to recollect a thousand instances of inconsistent conduct. I can justify my removing to the great sphere of England, upon a principle of laudable ambition; but the frequent scenes of what I must call dissolute conduct are inexcusable; and often and often, when she was very ill, in London have I been indulging in festivity with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Courtenay, Malone, etc. etc. etc., and have come home late and disturbed her repose. Nay, when I was last at Auchinleck, on purpose to soothe and console her, I repeatedly went from home; and both on those occasions, and when neighbours visited me, drank a great deal too much wine. On Saturday last, dining at a gentleman's house, where I was visiting for the first time, and was eager to obtain political influence, I drank so freely, that, riding home in the dark without a servant, I fell from my horse and bruised my shoulder severely. Next

morning I had it examined by a surgeon, who found no fracture or dislocation, but blooded me largely to prevent inflammation. While I was thus confined to bed, came a letter from Colonel Lowther, one of Lord Lonsdale's Members, informing me that his Lordship would set out for London as soon as I arrived at Lowther, and would be glad to have my company in the carriage with him. I expected such a letter, because I was engaged to appear as Recorder of Carlisle, for the Corporation, in a Cause brought against us in the King's Bench, which I knew was to come on this month or early in June. But I was in a great dilemma what to do. I was afraid I should not be able to travel, and to leave my wife in such a state was severe. She, with a spirit which I cannot enough admire, animated me to set out, which I accordingly did, resolved to return as soon as the business was over, and bring our two sons with me, to be some comfort to her, while she can at all be sensible of it. His Lordship's *way* is exceedingly dilatory, so that we have not set out to-day as was proposed, and perhaps we may not go for a day or two longer. I philosophically resign myself to what may happen; this being (as Governor Penn, the American, and one of his Members, and a sensible worthy fellow, says) a school of its own kind.

My shoulder is more uneasy, and there is now an extended rheumatism through that arm, and part of the breast next to it, which I feel acutely, while I cannot put on and off my clothes without help. But I will go forward. To be *zealous* is, with justice, a strong recommendation; and such is the great Parliamentary influence, that, be the Minister who will, he may when he pleases get almost anything for a friend. I have no right to expect that he will give me a seat in Parliament, but I shall not be surprised if he does.

Entre nous, my chance for representing my own County is very small. There is a great coalition between Lord Eglintoun and Sir Adam Fergusson, formed and supported by Dundas. Against that there are three candidates; one who has a large number of votes, and two of us who have each such a number that he cannot succeed unless we both join him. It is possible that, by remaining firm, there may be such a throw of the dice, or such a junction, that I may be a Member at least for a part of the Parliament. Meantime, *knowing my small chance*, I spend almost nothing in electioneering, yet keep up a spirited appearance.

At our last general Quarter-Sessions I was appointed Chairman, or Præses, as we call it. I proposed and carried an address to the Prince of Wales, which I had prepared, expressing a grateful sense of his public conduct with regard to the Regency. You will allow, when you read it, that I have been very happy in wording it, so as all fair ones must approve of it; for truly his Royal Highness (as far as we have a right to know) behaved admirably. I am carrying it up, to be presented by the Earl of Eglintoun, accompanied by such Justices of us as may be in London. This will add something to my *conspicuousness*. Will that word do? As to Pitt, he is an insolent fellow, but so able, that upon the whole I must support him against the *Coalition;* but I will work him, for he has behaved very ill to me. Can he wonder at my wishing for preferment, when men of the first family and fortune in England struggle for it? We shall see; meantime the attempt rouses my spirits. What a state is my present!—full of ambition and projects to attain wealth and eminence, yet embarrassed in my circumstances, and depressed with family distress, which at times makes everything in life seem indifferent. I

often repeat Johnson's lines, in his vanity of human wishes:

> "Shall helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
> Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?"

Your account of your young family pleases me much, while I am at the same time struck with a strange memento how old we now are. May God bless them! My heart, and that of my dear wife, were tenderly touched with the very affectionate and I am sure sincere offer of accommodation by you and Mrs. Temple; I heartily wish she had been able and willing to accept of it; but *home* is her delight in health, and *solace* in sickness. She has nothing of my roving disposition, who may very possibly be one day in Asia. You have told me that I was the most thinking man you ever knew; it is certainly so as to my own life. I am continually conscious, continually *looking back*, or *looking forward*, and wondering how I shall feel in situations which I anticipate in fancy. My journal will afford materials for a very curious narrative. I assure you I do not now live with a view to have surprising incidents, though I own I am desirous that my life should *tell*.

What aid can my wife have from religion, except a pious resignation to the great and good God? For indeed she is too shrewd to receive the common topics: she is keen and penetrating. Is it not difficult to guard oneself from doubting or distrusting in some degree, when one is deeply afflicted and has no light in prospect? How dismal, how affecting is it to me to see my cousin, my friend, my wife wasting away before my eyes! And the more distressing it is that she is as sensible as ever, so that we cannot see *why* this is. I entreat all the comfort you can give. Write to me in London directly.

It is an additional vexation that my great Work must be suspended for some time, but I cannot help it now: I was much too idle and dilatory for years. I hope in the course of the winter to have it out.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to your young family.

I am ever, my dear friend,
Yours most affectionately,
JAMES BOSWELL.

77] AUCHINLECK, *3rd July*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your letter upon my most severe loss proves that you are now the same steady, warm-hearted friend I have ever known you. O my friend, this is affliction indeed! My two boys and I posted from London to Auchinleck, night and day, in sixty-four hours and a quarter; but alas! our haste was all in vain. The fatal stroke had taken place before we set out. It was very strange that we had no intelligence whatever upon the road, not even in our own parish, nor till my second daughter came running out from the house, and announced to us the dismal event in a burst of tears. O my Temple, what distress! what tender and painful regrets! what unavailing, earnest wishes to have but one week, one day, in which I might again hear her admirable conversation, and assure her of my fervent attachment, notwithstanding all my irregularities. It was some relief to me to be told that she had, after I was set out, mentioned what I think I wrote to you, that she had pressed me to go up and show my zeal for Lord Lonsdale; but when on my return, before the Cause came on, I found that by my going away at that unlucky time I had not been with her to soothe her last moments, I cried bitterly,

and upbraided myself for leaving her, for she would not have left me. This reflection, my dear friend, will, I fear, pursue me to my grave. She had suffered a great deal from her disease for some weeks before her death; but the actual scene of dying itself was not dreadful. She continued quite sensible till a few minutes before, when she began to doze calmly, and expired without any struggle. When I saw her, four days after, her countenance was not at all disfigured. But alas! to see my excellent wife and the mother of my children, and that most sensible, lively woman, lying cold and pale and insensible, was very shocking to me. I could not help doubting it was a deception. I could hardly bring myself to agree that the body should be removed, for it was still a consolation to me to go and kneel by it, and talk to my dear, dear Peggie. She was much respected by all who knew her, so that her funeral was remarkably well attended. There were nineteen carriages followed the hearse, and a large body of horsemen and the tenants of all my lands. It is not customary in Scotland for a husband to attend a wife's funeral; but I resolved, if I possibly could, to do her the last honours myself; and I was able to go through it very decently. I privately read the funeral service over her coffin in presence of my sons, and was relieved by that ceremony a good deal. On the Sunday after, Mr. Dun delivered, almost verbatim, a few sentences which I sent him as a character of her. I imagined that I should not be able to stay here after the sad misfortune, but I find that I cling to it with a melancholy pleasure.

Honest David is perpetually pressing my confining my family to Scotland. But alas! my dear friend, should I or could I be satisfied with narrow provinciality, which was formerly so irksome, and must now

be much more so? I have agreed that my second daughter shall pass this winter at Edinburgh, as she has desired it, in order to finish her education. But were my daughters to be Edinburgh-mannered girls, I could have no satisfaction in their company. Veronica wishes to be boarded this winter with a lady in London. Little Betsy, who is just nine years old, goes to-morrow to a quiet boarding-school at Ayr, our country-town, till I settle where to place her for a year or two. I am thinking of a convent in France, or rather in Flanders, where she can be well educated a certain length very cheap, and then I would finish her at one of the great English boarding-schools. Yet if I can find a good and cheap English one, I may probably not send her abroad. Can you and Mrs. Temple advise me? My eldest son, I am resolved, shall go to Eton this winter. I am to have only chambers in the Temple after Christmas. I may perhaps come to you in autumn, if Malone goes to Ireland, so that the revising of Johnson's Life cannot proceed till winter. I am much obliged to you for your prayer. I experience that piety affords the only real comfort. My kindest love to you and yours. I am forcing myself to be as busy as I can, and think of going the Northern Circuit.

Ever most affectionately yours,

J. B.

Pray write often, though but a few lines.

78] AUCHINLECK, *2nd August*, 1789.

MY DEAREST TEMPLE,—A more comforting letter than your last never was received by a friend.

I am now quite settled as to my daughters. The eldest goes to Mrs. Buchanan's, the good widow lady

with an accomplished daughter, in London, where she will be exceedingly well as a friendly boarder; the second goes for one year to Edinburgh, to a boarding-school, where her education will be completed, and she will have countenance shown her by many good friends of her valuable mother; and little Betsy, nine years old, shall be left by me at the place which you satisfy me the very best for her. The distance no doubt is some objection, but not so strong as there would be to a convent, because I can see her sooner, and the very kind offer that she shall be with you and Mrs. Temple in the holidays, for which I most heartily thank you, and of which I shall frankly accept, is perfectly decisive. I cannot yet resolve whether I shall come to you this month, so as to be at Carlisle the beginning of October, as my office of Recorder obliges me to be there annually at Michaelmas; or whether I shall keep up appearances by going a part of the Northern Circuit, and not be with you till after Michaelmas, when I imagine the weather is sufficiently favourable for viewing the Land's End.

My immediate object is our County election of an interim Member, in room of Colonel Montgomerie, who has got a place of £500 a year. Dundas is insolently forcing upon us a gentleman from another County, which I and the other two Declarants, as candidates at the General Election against his candidate, now unite to resist. To-morrow is the election-day; I fear we shall lose it, but we shall make an admirable figure. To own the truth, I have very little chance for success at the General Election, but I may perhaps negotiate for a *part* of the Parliament. The Prince of Wales has received our Address most graciously, and I am to be presented to his Royal Highness, who desired it might be signified that he regretted Mr. Boswell was gone from town.

By all these means, my dear friend, my attention is a good deal dissipated; but I feel that the great and pathetic deprivation which I have suffered distresses me at frequent intervals more than at first. Gracious God, grant me resignation and hope! O my friend, you shall know what I endure when we meet.

My very best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to your young family.

Ever most affectionately yours,

J. B.

Pray be good enough to write often.

79] ROSE CASTLE, *Sunday, 23rd August*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I left Auchinleck with intention to join the Northern Circuit at Carlisle. I went first to Lowther, the great man having invited me, by a letter, to come to him as soon as I should find it convenient. My mind was so sore from my late severe loss, that I shrunk from the rough scene of the roaring, bantering society of lawyers. I consulted Lord Lonsdale, who thought I might stay away, as I had a very good excuse. I accordingly remained at Lowther. Still I was in sad distress, though I forced an appearance of doing wonderfully well.

A strange accident happened: the house at Lowther was so crowded, that I and two other gentlemen were laid in one room. On Thursday morning my wig was missing; a strict search was made, all in vain. I was obliged to go all day in my nightcap, and absent myself from a party of ladies and gentlemen, who went and dined with the Earl on the banks of the lake,—a piece of amusement which I was glad to shun, as well as a dance which they had at night. But I was in

a ludicrous situation. I suspected a wanton trick, which some people think witty; but I thought it very ill-timed to one in my situation. Next morning the Earl and a Colonel, who I thought might have concealed my wig, declared to me upon honour they did not know where it was; and the conjecture was that a clergyman who was in the room with me, and had packed up his portmanteau in a great hurry to set out in the morning early, might have put it up among his things. This is very improbable; but I could not long remain an object of laughter, so I went twenty-five miles to Carlisle on Friday, and luckily got a wig there fitted for me in a few hours. Yesterday I came to this seat of the Bishop, where I find myself somewhat easier, there being more quietness. His Lordship's chaplain read prayers, and preached to us in his chapel to-day. The scene is fine externally, and hospitable and quiet within; but alas! my grief preys upon me night and day. I am amazed when I look back. Though I often and often dreaded this loss, I had no conception how distressing it would be. May God have mercy upon me! I am quite restless and feeble and desponding. I return to Lowther tomorrow for two days, to show that I am not at all in a pet, and then I am to return to Auchinleck for a little time.

Such is my melancholy frame at present, that I waver as to all my plans. I have an avidity for death; I eagerly wish to be laid by my dear wife; years of life seem insupportable. I dread that Eton may make my son expensive and vicious, and it seems hard to send my little daughter two hundred miles beyond London. Every prospect that I turn my mind's eye upon is dreary. Why should I struggle? I certainly am constitutionally unfit for any employment. The Law life in Scotland, amongst vulgar familiarity, would

now quite destroy me. I am not able to acquire the Law of England. To be in Parliament, unless as an independent Member, would gall my spirit; to live in the country would either harass me by forced exertions, or sink me into a gloomy stupor. Let me not think at present, far less *resolve*. The "Life of Johnson" still keeps me up; I must bring that forth, and then I think I may bury myself in London, in total obscure indifference, and let the savings of my estate accumulate for my family.

God bless you, my dear friend! What a blessing is it to me that I have, through all the vicissitudes of my life, had my Temple. But alas! alas! am I certain one hour of retaining him? and when the fatal news arrives that he is gone (if it arrives to me), how am I to support it?

Almighty and most merciful Father! let me never impiously repine. May I be enabled by thy grace *really* to submit myself entirely to thy divine Will. Yet as "Jesus wept" for the death of Lazarus, I hope my tears at this time are excused.

How much do I regret that I have not applied myself more to learning. "Adversis perfugium et solatium præbent,"* is, I believe literally true of "studia" in a certain degree. The woeful circumstance of such a state of mind as I now experience is that it *rejects* consolation; it feels an indulgence in its own wretchedness. O my friend, what would I give for one of those years with my dearest cousin, friend and wife, which are past! May I not flatter myself with a dawn

* Cic., Pro Archiâ Poetâ, c. 7.—The remainder of the quotation Boswell might have remembered equally appositely :—"Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur."

of hope that I shall be permitted to see her again, aye and to be with her, not to be separated! What can one think? what can one do in so wretched a state as this? She used on all occasions to be my comforter; she, methinks, could now suggest rational thoughts to me; but where is she? O my Temple, I am miserable. It is astonishing what force I have put upon myself since her death, how I have entertained company, etc., etc.; but all this makes me worse. Is it possible that I yet can have any enjoyment in this state of being? My kindest compliments to all your family. Value Mrs. Temple warmly while you have her. Write to me under cover to Mr. Garforth. Ever, etc.

J. B.

80] LONDON, *13th October*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Believe me I cannot sufficiently thank you for the comfort your last most friendly letter gave me. Your kindness has all advantages: it is wise, virtuous, and pleasing. I thank God my mind has attained more composure than when I wrote to you from the Bishop of Carlisle's; but the truth is, I am in a kind of dissipated stupor, and am afraid to think. I left Auchinleck on the first of this month; I had before that gone to Carlisle, and met Lord Lonsdale, to license the publicans. All went on well, and I returned for some time to Auchinleck. My eldest son and I were a night at Lowther, on our return to town. My wig was found, and the way in which it was lost will remain as secret as the author of Junius.

On consideration, and hearing my friends here, I cannot think of sending little Betsy so far as Devon-

shire, especially as she would be above seventy miles from your house. I am warmly thankful to you and Mrs. Temple for your kind offers, but I am inquiring for a boarding-school in the neighbourhood of London. This being now my resolution, I defer my visit to you. Malone, who obligingly revises my "Life of Johnson," is to go to Ireland when his Shakespeare is published, which will be about Christmas. I am therefore to get as much of his time as may be while he remains, as he may not return from Ireland till the summer. I think of visiting you in the Christmas holidays, or perhaps not till spring or summer: we shall consult in mutual letters.

Sir Joshua Reynolds' loss of the sight of one eye, and weakness of the other, you may believe must afflict him deeply: he is another instance of *dici beatus ante obitum nemo*. His friends are assiduous in consoling him.

I shall write more fully soon; and, offering my best compliments to your family, I ever am, my dear Temple,

Your most affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

14*th October*.—Having been too late for the Post yesterday, I have opened my packet to add a little to this letter. David has told me of your proposal to take two shares in the Tontine, and in what a friendly manner you have written to him concerning the £200 which I owe you. I have written to my agent at Edinburgh pressingly, to exert [himself] in getting me payment of what is due to me; and I hope by January to be able to answer your convenience, for I cannot say demand. If not, a little longer delay may not be very inconvenient; and I will, at all events, have

your money ready before the Tontine is closed. How unpleasant is it to be *straitened* in our *circumstances*, as the phrase is; yet this I have been for twenty years, and, I dread, must be so I know not how long. I must reckon my children at £100 a year each, £500; after which I reckon I cannot command more than £350. I am looking for chambers in the Temple. I am not at all well today. I have had a restless night, and many painful thoughts of my irreparable loss. Yesterday afternoon Malone and I revised and made ready for the Press thirty pages of Johnson's Life: he is much pleased with it; but I feel a sad indifference, and he says I have not the use of my faculties. They have been torpid for some time, except in conversation; I hope to recover them. I go to Eton tomorrow with my eldest son. I was there last week to prepare matters, and to my agreeable surprise found myself highly considered there, was asked by Dr. Davies the Head-master to dine at the Fellows' table, and made a creditable figure. *I certainly have the art of making the most of what I have.* How should one who has had only a Scotch education be quite at home at Eton? *I had my classical quotations very ready.* I have drunk too much wine for some time past.* I fly to every mode of agitation. I am now to try fixing my attention to my *magnum opus*.

* Alas that Boswell should not recollect at the right time his own apophthegm, "A drunken fellow is not honest—'a stick,' said I, 'kept always moist must become rotten.'"—*Boswelliana, Philobib. Soc.*, vol. ii.

CHAPTER XVI

1789–1790

Habit of intemperance—Malone—Boswell's own opinion of the merits of the "Life of Johnson"—Private affairs—A good dinner —Monument to Dr. Johnson—"European Settlement," written by Burke's cousin—Printing the "Life of Johnson"—Inscription on his monument—Readable style of writing.

THE account which Boswell gives to Mr. Temple in the letters of November the 28th and 30th, of the labour he underwent in preparing his *magnum opus* for the Press, is probably no exaggeration. No matter of minutest detail, however trifling in itself, was allowed to pass by the indefatigable biographer into his pages without being tested and established to his own conscientious satisfaction. As he himself says, all he wrote "is told with authenticity and in a lively manner."

In the following letters will be found frequent reference to Boswell's two sons: all that it has been thought necessary to say with respect to their career will be found [in the original Introduction].

81] LONDON, *28th November*, 1789.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Let me address you from Cato:—

> "Thou best of friends,
> Pardon a weak, distemper'd soul, that swells
> In sudden gusts, and sinks again in calms."

Your last letter supposes too truly my situation. With grief continually at my heart, I have been endeavouring

to seek relief in dissipation and in wine, so that my life for some time past has been unworthy of myself, of you, and of all that is valuable in my character and connections. For a week past, as the common phrase is, "I have taken up," and, by a more regular and quiet course, find myself, I think, rather better. I cannot express to you, Temple, what I suffer from the loss of my valuable wife and the mother of my children. While she lived, I had no occasion almost to think concerning my family; every particular was thought of by her, better than I could. I am the most helpless of human beings; I am in a state very much that of one in despair.

30*th November*.—I have though, I assure you, a constant solace to my unhappiness in thinking of you, whose friendship I have tried and found constant for more than half my life, and whose worth my Popish imagination cannot help somehow viewing as a kind of *credit*, on which I may in part repose.

My apology for not coming to you, as I fully intended and wished, is really a sufficient one; for the revision of my "Life of Johnson" by so acute and knowing a critic as Mr. Malone is of most essential consequence, especially as he is *Johnsonianissimus*; and, as he is to hasten to Ireland as soon as his Shakespeare is fairly published, I must avail myself of him *now*. His hospitality and my other invitations, and particularly my attendance at Lord Lonsdale's, have lost us many evenings: but I reckon that a third of the Work is settled, so that I shall get to press very soon. You cannot imagine what labour, what perplexity, what vexation I have endured in arranging a prodigious multiplicity of materials, in supplying omissions, in searching for papers, buried in different masses, and all this besides the exertion of composing and polishing:

many a time have I thought of giving it up. However, though I shall be uneasily sensible of its many deficiencies, it will certainly be to the world a very valuable and peculiar volume of biography, full of literary and characteristical *anecdotes* (which word, by the way, Johnson always condemned, as used in the sense that the French, and we from them, use it, as signifying particulars *) *told with authenticity and in a lively manner.* Would that it were in the booksellers' shops! Methinks, if I had this *magnum opus* launched, the Public has no further claim upon me; for I have promised no more, and I may die in peace, or retire into dull obscurity, *reddarque tenebris.* Such is the gloomy ground of my mind, that any agreeable perceptions have an uncommon, though but a momentary, brightness. But alas! my friend, be the accidents as they may, how is the substance? how am I? With a pious submission to God, but at the same time a kind of obstinate feeling toward men, I walk about upon the earth with inward discontent, though I may appear the most cheerful man you meet. I may have many gratifications, but the comfort of life is at an end.

I shrunk, on a near approach of the time, from

* In Johnson's Dictionary we find the word thus defined :—

"ANECDOTE, *n. s.* 1. Something yet unpublished; secret history.

"Some modern anecdotes aver
He nodded in his easy chair."—PRIOR.

"2. It is now used, after the French, for a biographical incident, a minute passage of private life."

However now we hear of "anecdotes" alike of great men (such as prime ministers or editors of posthumous letters), of little children (as the children of emperors and those found in infant, missionary, and ragged schools); of wise politicians and clever pointer-dogs; of tragedians, elephants, and other learned occupants of the British stage, and so on. In fact, if Johnson were wont to be shocked in the eighteenth century by the abuse of the word, in the nineteenth he would have been horrified.

sending my youngest daughter to such a distance; indeed Sir Joshua said there would be a loss of all natural affection; and considering that she was not to be in your neighbourhood either, I placed her at Mr. Hockley's, at Blackland's House, Chelsea, a very excellent boarding-school, where I intend she shall be for some years, without being a single night from it, that I may have one unindulged English daughter, of whom I fancy myself to be vain. She is very pretty and very clever.

As for the other four, who have all been too much indulged, my second daughter is at a good boarding-school at Edinburgh, and under the inspection of her *Grandmamma*, as my father's widow is called, who, I must say, is exceedingly good to her. How much better is it that I am on decent terms with that lady! My eldest daughter is at the house of a lady here, a Mrs. Buchanan, with whose daughter, a very accomplished girl, Veronica is very intimate; but I can perceive already that my daughter will not long be happy in that situation, and the second one must escape from school in a year. What then is to become of them? I am utterly at a loss. They cannot live with satisfaction, or even propriety, in a house here with me, as I am very little at home, cannot afford to keep a carriage, and have nobody to take them out to visit, or to public places. Undoubtedly my having a house in Edinburgh would be best for them; but, besides that my withdrawing thither would cut me off from all those chances which may in time raise me in life, I could not possibly endure Edinburgh now, unless I were to have a Judge's place to bear me up; and even then I should sigh deeply for the Metropolis. Malone advises me to find some respectable elderly lady, who, though well bred and well connected, has little fortune, and would be glad to be a companion and superinten-

dent of them, from the consideration of being comfortably accommodated, and having £30 or £40 to buy clothes. But *my* daughters are not what girls of fifteen and sixteen commonly are; they are exceedingly advanced for their years, and would not submit to such a woman, nor have I almost any authority over them. My only hold is their *affection*. To place them at Auchinleck by themselves would be wrong, and I am unlucky enough to have no female relation whatever with whom they could live, except my step-mother, and she could not take the trouble of having them with her. Is not this a sad situation? I have no guess what will be done.

I have given up my house, and taken good chambers in the Inner Temple, to have the appearance of a lawyer. O Temple! Temple! is this realising any of the towering hopes which have so often been the subject of our conversations and letters? Yet I live much with a great man, who, upon any day that his fancy shall be so inclined, may obtain for me an office which would make me independent. The state of my affairs is very disagreeable, but be not afraid for your £200, as you may depend upon its being repaid. My rent-roll is above £1600; but, deducting annuities, interest of debts, and expenses absolutely necessary at Auchinleck, I have but about £850 to spend. I reckon my five children at £500 a year. You see what remains for myself. I am this year to make one trial of the Lord Chancellor. In short I cast about everywhere. I do not see the smallest opening in Westminster Hall; but I like the scene, though I have attended only one day this last Term, being eager to get my "Life of Johnson" finished. And the delusion that practice may come at any time (which is certainly true) still possesses me.

My eldest son has been at Eton since the 15th of October. You cannot imagine how miserable he has been: he wrote to me for some time as if from the galleys, and intreated me to come to him. I did what was better; I sent his uncle David, who was firm, and brought me back a good report, that there was no reason to pity him. I have delayed and delayed going, and I can perceive he hardens. Perhaps I may go before the holidays commence, which will be on the tenth of this month. I mean that he shall be two years at Eton, then two at Edinburgh, and then study Civil Law, etc. in Holland and Germany. If he lives he will have £3000 a year, for my estate is rising every year; and the lands life-rented by my step-mother, if properly managed, would yield £500 a year.

My second son is an extraordinary boy: he is much of his father (vanity of vanities). He is to be a barrister, and I am very desirous to train him properly. He is of a delicate constitution, but not unhealthy, and his spirit never fails him. He is still in the house with me; indeed he is quite my companion, though only eleven in September. He goes in the day to the academy in Soho Square, kept by the Rev. Dr. Barrow, formerly of Queen's, Oxford, a coarse north-countryman, but a very good scholar; and there my boy is very well taught. After the holidays I am to take resolution and board my little James *somewhere*, for while under my roof he passes his time chiefly with my old housekeeper and my footman. What shall I do? Soho is a competently good place, but there are few boys there but of an inferior rank; yet is it not injustice to a good master, should I remove my son? The boy wishes much to go to Eton, because his brother is there; I, on the other hand, think it better they should be separate, and wish to place him at

Westminster. To that there is the objection of danger to his morals, which however is answered by the boys there not being worse than at other schools, and by the first people in the nation continuing to keep their sons there. The *éclat* of Westminster, I think, would be of service to him, and I have a great respect for Vincent, the present Head-master. I am not sure whether I have mentioned to you with what respect I found myself treated at Eton; how, the first time I went, Dr. Davies carried me to dine with him at the Fellows' table, and the next time had me to dine at his own house, with an excellent company, both ladies and gentlemen. I certainly have some talent at making the most of myself, to a certain extent: but I have as yet done nothing essential and permanent for my advantage.

I cannot help thinking how strangely it has happened, that I have never yet had, properly speaking, the advantages of a man of fortune, but have been continually straitened. My excellent wife was at less expense than any woman, even of much inferior rank, and my genteel appearance has been occasional only: yet I do believe I have had more *enjoyment* than many who have grand establishments. I have above £1000 due to me out of the patrimonies of my wife's nephews, which I hope will be paid in the course of a year and a half, or a part of it this year, when I hope also to get payment of poor Johnston's debt.

The week before last I indulged myself by giving one dinner. I had Wilkes, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Flood the Irish orator, Malone, Courtenay, Governor Penn, grandson of old William, and who brought over the petition from Congress, which was obstinately and unwisely rejected, and my brother David; we had a very good day. Would I were but able to give many such

dinners! Malone gives them without number. Last Sunday I dined with him, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Metcalfe, Mr. Windham, Mr. Courtenay, and young Mr. Burke, being a select number of Dr. Johnson's friends, to settle as to effectual measures for having a monument erected to him in Westminster Abbey: it is to be a whole-length statue of him, by Bacon, which will cost £600. Sir Joshua and Sir William Scott, his executors, are to send circular letters to a number of people, of whom we make a list, as supposing they will contribute. Several of us subscribed five guineas each, Sir Joshua and Metcalfe ten guineas each, Courtenay and young Burke two guineas each. Will you not be one of us were it but for one guinea? We expect that the Bench of Bishops will be liberal, as he was the greatest supporter of the hierarchy. That venerable sound brings to my mind the ruffians of France, who are attempting to destroy all order, ecclesiastical and civil. The present state of that country is an intellectual earthquake, a whirlwind, a mad insurrection, without any immediate cause, and therefore we see to what a horrible anarchy it tends. I do not mean that the French ought not to have a Habeas-Corpus Act, but I know nothing more they wanted.

I wish you joy of your young sailor's return. What a feeling it must have been to see him again after a three years' absence! You must be somewhat in the situation of a hen who has hatched ducks. A sea life must seem very unnatural to you; I am sure it does so to me.

Is not this a long letter? but it is too much about myself. Alas! I read almost nothing. I am however just ending the "European Settlements in America," for the first time: it is an admirable compend. Burke

said to me, "I did not write it; I do not deny that a friend did, and I revised it." Malone tells me that it was written by Will Burke, the cousin of Edmund, when they were in Wales; but it is everywhere evident that Burke himself has contributed a great deal to it.

Now, my dear friend, let not your correspondence flag: let us write often, though short. Perhaps you will be here in the Spring. My visit to you must be deferred till my Work is printed and the weather is fine. Poor John Dun will be a sad loser by his Sermons, etc. Could you get him no subscribers? Best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to all the children.

Ever yours,

J. B.

82] LONDON, *8th Feb.*, 1790.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—It is a long time since I wrote you a letter of twelve pages, to which I have received no return; and, notwithstanding our mutual allowance for unaccountable indolence and procrastination, I am uneasy at your long silence. Pray then write.

Both my sons have had severe rash fever. The eldest, after much childish murmuring, reconciled himself to Eton: he came home for the holidays but was soon taken ill, and is yet so weak that he is not returned to school, though it is three weeks after the time. I hope to have him at his proper station in a day or two. My second boy, after the rash was over, had a severe fever, produced by the dregs of the rash-fever, so that I was much alarmed for him, and called Dr. Warren, who attended him for some time. I thank God he is now pretty well. By Dr. Warren's advice, I am now resolved to send him to Westminster School.

Warren has three of his own sons there, and assures me that they are very healthy. I still keep on my house in Queen Ann Street West, having taken it till Midsummer, upon my finding that chambers in the Temple, which I thought I had secured, were let to me by a person who had not a right. It is better that I am still here, for I am within a short walk of Mr. Malone, who revises my "Life of Johnson" with me. We have not yet gone over quite a half of it, but it is at last fairly in the Press. I intended to have printed it upon what is called an *English* letter, which would have made it look better; but, upon calculation, it would have made two quarto volumes, and two quarto volumes for one Life would have appeared exorbitant, though in truth it is a view of much of the literature, and many of the literary men, of Great Britain for more than half a century. I have therefore taken a smaller type, called *Pica*, and even upon that I am afraid its bulk will be very large. It is curious to observe how a printer calculates: he arranges a number of pages, and the words in them, at different parts of the "copy" (as the MS. is called), and so finds the number of words. Mine here are four hundred and one thousand six hundred. Does not this frighten you? By printing a page, the number of words it holds is discovered; and, by dividing the sum total of words by that number, we get the number of pages. Mine will be, we reckon, eight hundred. I think it will be without exception the most entertaining book you ever read. I cannot be done with printing before the end of August.

You will have seen that Johnson's friends have been exerting themselves for his Monument, which is to cost six hundred guineas. We have now near to £400 of the money. Can we have no Cornish coin? I wish you could assist us in your neighbourhood. As your

character of Gray was adopted by him,* it would appear well if you sent two guineas. We shall have a great dispute as to the epitaph. Flood, the orator, though a distinguished scholar, says it should be in English, as a compliment to Johnson's having perpetuated our language: he has comprised his opinion in these lines:

> "No need of Latin, or of Greek, to grace
> Our Johnson's memory and inscribe his grave;
> His native tongue demands this mournful space,
> To pay the immortality he gave."

The Post-bell summons me to conclude, with best compliments to Mrs. Temple and love to your children, from your most affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—Is there any doubt of your coming to London this year? surely not! It is a heaven upon earth *comparatively*.

83] LONDON, *13th February*, 1790.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your few lines of the 6th warmed my heart. I fully excuse you for your long silence, and sincerely sympathise with you while under the pressure of that uncomfortable indolence, which I know so well. I also know how grateful it is to a man in that state to have the animated attention of his friends, especially those who are in the Metropolis, to whom he looks up; and as by God's mercy I am at present wonderfully well, I shall endeavour to write to you often, and to supply you with spirits from my store. I cannot account for my healthful mind at this time; there is no change for

* The Subscription List will show any reader who is curious on the matter if this inducement influenced Mr. Temple to subscribe to the Memorial.

the better in my circumstances. I have no better prospect of gratifying my ambition, or of increasing my fortune. The irreparable loss of my valuable wife, the helpless state of my daughters, in short all that ever hung heavy upon me is still as it was; but my spirits are vigorous and elastic. I dine in a different company almost every day, at least scarcely ever twice running in the same company, so that I have fresh accessions of ideas. I drink with Lord Lonsdale one day; the next I am quiet in Malone's elegant study revising my "Life of Johnson," of which I have high expectations both as to fame and profit. I surely have the art of writing agreeably. The Lord Chancellor told me he had read every word of my Hebridian Journal; he could not help it; adding, "Could you give a rule how to write a book that a man *must* read? I believe Longinus could not."

Honest David dined with me yesterday. Your power-of-attorney is perfectly right. Dundas deserves to be hanged for his treacherous and unfeeling conduct to David; but David will stick to him. I am thinking to write, in my way, against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; I have no patience with the impudent Sectarians. You know I meet at Dilly's table many of those fellows who are very firebrands.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to the children. My sons are getting well. I saw my little daughter at Chelsea to-day, very much improved; she is very pretty,—she really is! Adieu, my oldest and most intimate friend!

Most affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

CHAPTER XVII

1790–1791

Political Disappointment—Lord Lonsdale's shocking roughness—A lady of fortune—Death of Ross, the player—Hypochondria—Advantages of high life and five hundred pounds per annum—Macklin, the actor—Last sheet of "Life of Johnson"—Meditations on matrimony—Miss Bagnal—War with Russia—Helping the Turks.

ONE of Boswell's political and place-seeking misfortunes will be found recounted presently, in a manner which, though eminently ridiculous, shows how deeply he was mortified by the transaction referred to. The reader will also see the approach of fresh matrimonial speculations; but, on the whole, the correspondence continues to display melancholy proofs that poor Boswell's brightest days were past. The animal vigour which was the main support of his success in society, and which was wont to sustain him through the discomforts he was destined to encounter, was now clearly decaying, and with it ebbed his spirits.

84] CARLISLE, *21st June*, 1790.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—At no period during our long friendship have I been more unhappy than at present. The day on which I was obliged to set out from London, I had an hour allowed me, after a most shocking conversation with Lord Lonsdale, and I hastened home in hopes of finding you, but you were gone out. It was to inform you that, upon his seeing me by no means in good humour, he challenged it roughly, and said, "I suppose you thought I was to

bring you into Parliament; I never had any such intention." In short he expressed himself in the most degrading manner, in presence of a low man from Carlisle, and one of his menial servants! The miserable state of low spirits I had, as you too well know, laboured under for some time before, made me almost sink under such unexpected insulting behaviour. He insisted rigorously on my having solicited the office of Recorder of Carlisle; and that I could not, without using him ill, resign it, until the duties which were now required of it were fulfilled, and without a sufficient time being given for the election of a successor. Thus was I dragged away, as wretched as a convict; and in my fretfulness I used such expressions as irritated him almost to fury, so that he used such expressions towards me that I should have, according to the irrational laws of honour sanctioned by the world, been under the necessity of risking my life, had not an explanation taken place. This happened during the first stage. The rest of the journey was barely tolerable: we got to Lancaster on Saturday night, and there I left him to the turmoil of a desperate attempt in electioneering. I proceeded to Carlisle last night, and to-day have been signing orders as to poor's-rates. I am alone at an inn, in wretched spirits, and ashamed and sunk on account of the disappointment of hopes, which led me to endure such grievances. I deserve all that I suffer. I may be kept hanging on for weeks, till the election and Midsummer Sessions are over; and I am at the same time distracted what to do in my own County, as to the state of which I expect letters every day. I am quite in a fever. O my old and most intimate friend, what a shocking state am I now reduced to! I entreat of you, if you possibly can, to afford me some consolation, directed to me here, and pray do not divulge

my mortification. I will endeavour to appear indifferent; and, as I now resign my Recordership, I shall gradually get rid of all communication with this brutal fellow.*

How much does it distress me to think, that I should have had a return of hypochondria at the very time when you and your amiable daughter were with us, and then that I should have been compelled to leave you. As to making provision for your amusement from my friends, alas! the selfishness of London is too great. I look up to God for relief to my mind; and I have this *real consolation*, that we have met after a long absence, the same friends as when we parted. My kindest compliments to Miss Temple.

Ever most affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—How unfortunate to be obliged to leave my friend, and interrupt my Work! Never was a poor ambitious projector more mortified. I am suffering without any prospect of reward, and only from my own folly. I apprehend you will be set out before this reaches London. May God bless you and Mrs. Temple, and your children! As to my conduct and future views, I take your admonition in good part, and shall profit by it in one way or other; but of this hereafter.

85] LONDON, *21st July*, 1790.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I gratefully acknowledged the receipt of your kind and soothing letter, directed to me at Carlisle, where I was detained in irksome captivity from Sunday the 20th June, till Thursday the 15th July, when I at length got free, and, with my daughter Euphemia, arrived here about noon on Saturday the

* Meaning his noble patron.

17th. Though my mind was very sick, I soon felt relief in London. I dined that day quietly with Malone. On Sunday I was at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, and dined again with Malone, having by mistake been too late for the Villa of Devaynes, the apothecary. On Monday I and my two daughters dined and passed the day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where were Lord Eliot and his son John, Mr. Metcalfe, Mr. Malone, Mr. Jepson, and Mr. Devaynes. Variety of company had an insensible influence upon my mind; but, whenever I was alone, my depression of spirits recurred. I have however dined yesterday and to-day at home with my daughters, and am tolerably well. On my return to town I found a serious cause of real anxiety, my dear little James having been seriously ill of a fever for near a week, and being still under that alarming disorder. I thank God that this day Dr. Warren has declared that the fever has left him. I am in great concern what should be done with him, for he is so oppressed at Westminster School by the big boys that I am almost afraid to send him thither; but he must be at some school, and changes are disadvantageous.

Your letter of 7th June was lying for me here on my arrival. You may easily believe that I most sincerely sympathise with the uneasy feelings which you confess. What a state are we in! dissatisfied with the present, and longing for some other situation, and, when we reach *that*, very often experiencing more uneasiness, nay, imagining that what we wished to quit was better. Surely, my dear friend, there *must* be another world, in which such beings as we are will have our misery compensated. But is not this a state of probation? and, if it is, how awful is the consideration! I am struck with your question, "Have you

confidence to entreat the Divine aid?" In truth I am sensible that I do not sufficiently "*try* my ways," as the Psalmist says, and am even almost inclined to think with you, *that my great oracle Johnson did allow too much credit to good principles, without good practice.* What advice can I give you, my dear Temple, to be pleased with yourself, unless to beg that you may view yourself with my eyes? for instance, when I think of your creditable situation in the Church, while my attempts in the Law have been hitherto so unsuccessful, I wonder that you are not contented, though I would not have you satisfied. And considering your domestic disposition, your love of books and of rural scenes, you are upon the whole vastly well. But let us contribute all we can to each other's aid.

I did not go to Ayrshire, finding that I could only show how small a party I had. I shall keep up a candidateship, as giving consequence. I parted from the northern tyrant in a strange, equivocal state, for he was half irritated, half reconciled; but I promise you I shall keep myself quite independent of him. Best compliments to all.

Ever most affectionately yours,

J. B.

P.S.—Veronica says she has not found any feathers left by Miss Temple. My Work had not stopped during my absence. I shall now persevere in diligence; and, though I am now in woeful indifference, I trust that before it is finished a taste or relish shall return.

While in the North, I got such accounts of the lady of fortune, whose reputation you heard something of, that I was quite determined to make no advances. Whether I shall take any such step I doubt much.

The loss I have experienced is perpetually recurring; and, though there might be comforts in what you suggested, I fear there would be troubles.

86] LONDON, *15th September*, 1790.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your last letter is truly kind. I intended to have written you a long letter to-day, and for that purpose obtained from Lord Eliot the frank which covers this. But my old friend Ross, the player, died suddenly yesterday morning. I was sent for, as his most particular friend in town, and have been so busy in arranging his funeral, at which I am to be chief mourner, that I have left myself very little time —only about ten minutes. Poor Ross! he was an unfortunate man in some respects; but he was a true *bon-vivant*, a most social man, and never was without good eating and drinking, and hearty companions. He had school-fellows and friends who stood by him wonderfully. I have discovered that Admiral Barrington once sent him £100, and allowed him an annuity of £60 a-year.

As to the important part of your letter, I should not hesitate a moment, judging from the account which you give me of the offer which Miss Temple has. But I do not clearly understand of what family he is; I read "Duke of Breton."* Pray write the name fair, and be more full. Is the young gentleman a foreigner? But I would by no means refuse such an offer. She is indeed a charming girl, and was much admired here, even by the critic Malone.

God bless you, my dearest friend, in whom I have the consolation of unaltered affection, and ever am

Most sincerely yours,

J. B.

* [Sc. Bolton. See editor's Introduction.]

I shall, without fail, write again soon.

I have a letter to-day from honest David: he left London on Tuesday, half-past twelve at noon, and got to Auchinleck on Friday.

87] LONDON, *24th Nov.*, 1790.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Instead of a long letter, I write a scrap, and at the same time send another, part of one of an old date. Pray do not let your daughter refuse so good a match. I am in great spirits, and shall, upon my honour, write fully this week.

Ever most affectionately yours,

J. B.

88] LONDON, *7th February*, 1791.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Before this time you have been informed of my having had a most miserable return of bad spirits. Not only have I had a total distaste of life, but have been perpetually gnawed by a kind of mental fever. It is really shocking that human nature is liable to such inexplicable distress. O my friend, what can I do? In your last, I find that you are afflicted with discontent and disapprobation of yourself, —you, who are so learned, so elegant, so good a man in all the relations of life. Your observation in a former letter, as to time being measured not only by days and years, but by our advancement in life, is new and striking, and is brought home to us both, especially to me, who have obtained no advancement whatever; but let me not harass you with my complaints, but proceed to what concerns you and yours.

Miss Palmer, who has, I really believe, a sincere regard for you, applied to Lord Eliot, but all in vain. I believe I mentioned to you having been told that

several of the young men appointed by Lord Chatham had not served their time, and therefore were to be struck off, so that I hoped this might afford an opening; but what are we to do, when variety of interests draw so strong? I met Jerningham last night, at Lord Lucan's, and complimented him on his new poem, of which I have read a part. I spoke to him about your son; but, though I believe well inclined, he did not seem to think he could do much. I protest I hope most from Dundas. If you will allow me I will try him in my way, requesting he may do a kindness of much consequence to an old friend, unconnected with politics; *and let me have it to tell.* You should certainly write to him again, either for a vacancy now, or for the Newfoundland Station afterwards. It was a mistake to suppose that Hawkins* would write to Mr. Pitt: he never said he would, and he assures me he would not were his own brother in the case. It is agreeable to think that your son is a fine manly fellow, and does not seem to be discouraged though his promotion should be delayed. What a world is this! Here again I check myself, and go on. Your daughter is indeed a most valuable young woman, and we cannot be too anxious as to her settlement in life. I understood from your son that Mr. Powlett's attachment to her is very strong: this is a very favourable circumstance, and much to his credit. I should wish to see him. The objections which Mrs. Temple suggests are exceedingly sensible, but, if the character of the gentleman be steady, I should not fear the effects of his being in the high company you mention. At the same time I think it essential that he should have a reasonable income upon some *certainty.* If either in one way or

* [Sir Christopher; see Baring Gould's "Book of Devonshire Portraits."—Ed.]

another that is *secured*, I am clear that the match should take place.

Hawkins has been very attentive to me this winter, and we must take him as he is.*

May God bless you and yours, my ever dear friend, prays

Your most affectionate,
JAMES BOSWELL.

89] LONDON, *2nd April*, 1791.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I return you Mr. Powlett's letter, with which I am much pleased, and having, according to your desire, shown it to honest David, we had last night a conference upon the subject, which is truly interesting to your family. He agrees with me that, if Mr. Powlett and your daughter can be sure of £500 a year, such a match ought by no means to be rejected. He seems to me to have a very just view of what good may be derived from great connections; and from his having had so much experience of high life, he is not dazzled by it. If a man can associate with the great, and escape from "folly, vanity, and vice," there is no doubt that his manners and even sentiments will be refined and elevated; and the probable hopes of solid advantages, to be obtained from the regard of those who must have influence in the disposal of offices, which must be given in general as they desire, afford a rational ground for perseverance in cultivating their friendship by all honourable means.

If then we can be sure of £500 a year, and have besides such hopes, I really think it would be unreasonable to object as to circumstances. But, my dear friend, let us have a certainty of £500, or even £400

* That is "very malevolent." *Vide* letter at page 233.

a year. Your daughter is so amiable and accomplished, that I should take a sincere interest in her happiness, though she had not the strong claim of being my Temple's daughter.

Your kindness to me fairly makes me shed tears. Alas! I fear that my constitutional melancholy, which returns in such dismal fits, and is now aggravated by the loss of my valuable wife, must prevent me from any permanent felicity in this life. I snatch gratifications, but have no comfort, at least very little; yet your encouraging letters make me think at times that I may yet, by God's blessing, attain to a portion of happiness, such as philosophy and religion concur in assuring us that this state of progressive being allows. I get bad rest in the night, and then I brood over all my complaints,—the sickly mind, which I have had from my early years,—the disappointment of my hopes of success in life,—the irrevocable separation between me and that excellent woman, who was my cousin, my friend, and my wife,—the embarrassment of my affairs,—the disadvantage to my children in having so wretched a father, —nay, the want of absolute certainty of being happy after death, the *sure prospect* of which is frightful. No more of this!

Wednesday, 6th April.

Thus far I wrote on Saturday, when, feeling myself unhappy and restless, I sallied out with intention to go to the Play at Drury Lane Theatre, the "Siege of Belgrade," a new Opera, of which I had heard much as a gay exhibition; but the House was so crowded I could not get in. I then called on old Macklin, the comedian,* whom I found with a mind active and cheerful,

* Referred to in the "Life of Johnson," as having instructed Wedderburn in elocution.

in his ninety-second or third year. I could not but wonder, while he related theatrical stories *sixty years old*, and gave me an animated sketch of another Comedy in five Acts, which he has now finished and will come out next year. Here sat I, *forty years younger than him*, listless and desponding, and unable to rid my mind of a disagreeable sensation, as if I had been sitting in Edinburgh. I really, my dear Temple, believe that as much pain may be suffered from *antipathies* as from almost any cause. Would it not torture you to be again at Professor Hunter's, eating *jeel?* The possibility of a disturbed imagination reducing me to the mode of existence in my youth frightens me. Alas! what *real advances* have I made above that state? How delusive is this low-spirited thought! But indeed I much fear that to a speculating and very feeling mind, all that life affords will at times appear of no effect. When I recall the infinite variety of scenes through which I have passed, in my moments of sound sensation, I am elated; but in moments of depression, I either forget them all, or they seem indifferent.

My "Life of Johnson" is at last drawing to a close. I am correcting the last sheet, and have only to write an advertisement, to make out a note of Errata, and to correct a second sheet of Contents, one being done. I really hope to publish it on the 25th current. My old and most intimate friend may be sure that a copy will be sent to him. I am at present in such bad spirits that I have every fear concerning it,—that I may get no profit, nay, may lose,—that the Public may be disappointed, and think that I have done it poorly,—that I may make many enemies, and even have quarrels. Yet perhaps the very reverse of all this may happen.

When my book is launched, I shall, if I am alone and in tolerable health and spirits, have some furniture

put into my chambers in the Temple, and force myself to sit there some hours a day, and to attend regularly in Westminster Hall. The chambers cost me £20 yearly, and I may reckon furniture and a lad to attend there occasionally £20 more. I doubt whether I shall get fees equal to the expense. I am to dine with Sir William Scott, the King's Advocate at the Commons, to-morrow, and shall have a serious consultation with him, as he has always encouraged me. It is to be a family party, where I am to meet Miss Bagnal (his lady's sister), who may probably have six or seven hundred a year. She is about seven and twenty, and he tells me lively and gay—a Ranelagh girl—but of excellent principles, insomuch that she reads prayers to the servants in her father's family every Sunday evening. "Let me see such a woman," cried I; and accordingly I am to see her. She has refused young and fine gentlemen. "Bravo!" cried I; "we see then what her taste is." Here then I am, my Temple, my flattering self! A scheme—an adventure seizes my fancy. Perhaps I may not like her; and what should I do with such a companion, unless she should really take a particular liking to me, which is surely not probable; and, as I am conscious of my distempered mind, could I *honestly* persuade her to unite her fate with mine? As to my daughters, did I see a rational prospect of good by such a scheme, I should not neglect it on their account, though I should certainly be liberal to them. They have twice had little parties for cards and music, and have done wonderfully well. Hawkins was with us both times.

What a horrible rumour of war is this! To join the Turks!—it must not be. But perhaps some good may arise from Pitt's arrogance. There may be another navy promotion, and your son may get rank. I am

hesitating whether I should not write one of my characteristical pamphlets upon this crisis,—"An Appeal to the People upon the threatened Project of involving this Country in a War with Russia, in order to assist the Turks." *

> "Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
> The arm'd rhynoceros, or Hyrcanian tyger:
> Take any shape but that."

I am thinking to curtail my poem on the Slave Trade, and throw it into the world just before the great question comes on next Wednesday.†

Pray let me know the subject of your intended publication. Worthy Langton is in town.

Your little friend James is quite reconciled to Westminster School, is grown a manly fellow: *he*, I trust, will be a prosperous barrister.

There is no foundation for the match between Miss Palmer and Dr. B.: she is angry at me for talking of it, but I was only one of many. Best compliments and love to all with you. Let me hear more about Mr. Powlett.

Yours, etc.,

J. B.

* Alas! this "characteristical pamphlet" was never written—otherwise, it might have been reprinted by the late Emperor of All the Russias, besides being put into the Appendix to this Volume. It might also have been copied or cited as an Authority by some journals of the present day.

† This, it is believed, was never published.

CHAPTER XVIII

1791–1793

Publication of the "Life of Johnson"—A second "Odyssey"—Advertisements—The Home Circuit—Its superiority to the Northern—New matrimonial schemes—Sir Joshua Reynolds' Blindness—Journey to Auchinleck—Choice of a minister for a parish—Second Edition of the "Life of Johnson"—Boswell intoxicated, robbed and repentant.

THE *magnum opus*, the "Life of Johnson," was now launched. The date of the dedication to Sir Joshua Reynolds is the 20th April, 1791. This and the "Advertisements" to the two editions of the work are curiously self-complaisant, notwithstanding the occasional evil forebodings which harassed the biographer. "It seems," says Boswell, "in my moments of self-complacency, that this extensive biographical work, however inferior in its nature, may in one respect be assimilated to the 'Odyssey.' Amidst a thousand entertaining and instructive episodes, the hero is never long out of sight, for they are all in some degree connected with him; and he, in the whole course of the history, is exhibited by the author for the best advantage of his readers:

> 'Quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,
> Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssem.'

Should there be any cold-blooded or morose mortals who really dislike this book, I will give them a story to apply. When the great Duke of Marlborough, accompanied by Lord Cadogan, was one day reconnoitring the army in Flanders, a heavy rain came on, and they both called for their cloaks. Lord

Cadogan's servant, a good-humoured, alert lad, brought his Lordship's in a minute; the Duke's servant, a lazy, sulky dog, was so sluggish, that his Grace, being wet to the skin, reproved him, and had for an answer, with a grunt, 'I came as fast as I could'; upon which the Duke calmly said, 'Cadogan! I would not for a thousand pounds have that fellow's temper.'" *

Thus summarily Boswell disposes of hostile critics. It was not necessary for him, however, to fear them, for the success of his great Biography was immediate. He tells us, indeed, that in four months twelve hundred copies were disposed of—a number certainly very considerable in those days.

In July 1793 the second edition appeared, with "eight sheets of additional matter." This was a cause of great delight to Boswell, and he expresses his satisfaction in a very characteristic manner. He says: "There are some men, I believe, who have, or think they have, a very small share of vanity. Such may speak of their literary fame in a decorous style of diffidence: but I confess that I am so formed by nature and by habit, that to restrain the effusion of delight, on having obtained such fame, to me would be truly painful. Why then should I suppress it? Why 'out of the abundance of the heart' should I not speak? Let me then mention, with a warm, but no insolent exultation, that I have been regaled with spontaneous praise of my work by many and various persons, eminent for their rank, learning, talents, and accomplishments; much of which praise I have under their hands, to be reposited in my archives at Auchinleck. An honourable and reverend friend, speaking of the favourable reception of my volumes, even in the circles of fashion and elegance, said to me, 'You have made them all talk Johnson.' Yes, I may add, I have *Johnsonized* the land; and I trust they will not only talk, but think Johnson." †

The unfortunate habit of drinking, which seems at this time to have had firm hold of Boswell, was the cause of his meeting with an accident and being robbed, which led, however, only to his making another of his many but fruitless resolutions to reform and live soberly.

* Advertisement to Second Edition of "Life of Johnson."

† Advertisement to Second Edition, 1st July, 1793; and see *ante*, p. 272.

90] LONDON, *22nd August*, 1791.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Do not look upon me as unkind, because you have not heard from me for some time. My heart has been ever warm, but I have had my spirits dissipated; and now I write at midnight, on the eve of setting out for Auchinleck. My eldest son went thither, some time ago, to enjoy the grouse-shooting: I trusted him alone, as he is a steady boy.

I have gone the full round of the Home Circuit, to which I have returned, finding it much more pleasant,* and, though I did not get a single brief, do not repent of the expense, as I am showing myself desirous of business and imbibing legal knowledge. I made an excursion to Portsmouth and viewed the grand fleet, and there I was assured that the most difficult step in the Navy is from Midshipman to Lieutenant. My

* The distinction here made between the Northern and Home Circuits, and in favour of the latter, will not, it is to be hoped, produce any ill feeling between the two august bodies. From anxious inquiries which have been made with reference to the comparison here suggested by Boswell, the conclusion has been arrived at, that the Home Circuit still maintains, in addition to its high legal reputation, that gravity, decorum, and sobriety (especially amongst the juniors) which impressed Boswell so forcibly. It is stated that even at the Mess on "grand days," which might offer occasion for greater freedom and conviviality, nothing is to be heard except abstruse legal questions formally and reverently discussed, or important points connected with social and legislative matters learnedly and temperately debated. It should, however, be also here mentioned that it is stated on other authority that the very reverse of the above account is, and always has been, the truth. It is not incumbent upon the writer of this note to determine what the facts are; but he may suggest that the variation in the information may in part have arisen from the different periods of the evening at which the gentlemen who have been good enough to communicate with the publisher on the subject were wont to leave the mess-table. —ED.

first letter to Dundas, concerning your son, was repeating my words to you, that I was afraid he did not like me (or something to that effect), but that I believed him to be a generous fellow, and therefore advised you to apply to him. I mentioned to you how cordially he expressed himself towards your son when I saw him, and that he was to make a memorandum. I transmitted to him, from the Circuit, your last letter in one from myself, and I cannot doubt of his sincerity and zeal when an occasion offers. What a life have Midshipmen! yet all our Admirals have passed through it.*

I feel for what you say as to a certain person; but trust it was a casual cloud. Mr. Powlett has never appeared: I shall be glad to see him.

You must know I have had several matrimonial schemes of late. I shall amuse you with them from Auchinleck. One was with Miss Milles, daughter of the late Dean of Exeter, a most agreeable woman "d'un certain âge," and with a fortune of £10,000: she has left town for the summer. It was no small circumstance that she said to me, "Mr. Temple is a charming man." I hope to be here again on the 1st of October. My *magnum opus* sells wonderfully; twelve hundred are now gone, and we hope the whole seventeen hundred may be gone before Christmas. I must go to bed.

Ever most affectionately yours

JAMES BOSWELL.

91] LONDON, *22nd November*, 1791.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Another sad chasm in our correspondence is to be lamented. I wrote to you before I went to Scotland: since then I have not heard from you, except by receiving a few lines with an

* An original and very comforting reflection, both for Admirals and Midshipmen!

order to receive the title-deeds of Allardeen. Pray what would you have done about that matter, as my visit to you cannot be for a long time?

I had a very unhappy time in Ayrshire. My house at Auchinleck seemed deserted and melancholy; and it brought upon my mind, with increased force, the recollection of my having lost my dear and valuable wife. My London spirits were soon exhausted; I sank into languor and gloom; I felt myself very unfit to transact business with my tenants, or indeed with anybody. To escape from what I felt at Auchinleck, I visited a good deal, but alas! I could not escape from myself: in short you may see that I was exceedingly ill. I hoped to be relieved when I got to London; but my depression of spirits has continued; and still, though I go into jovial scenes, I feel no pleasure in existence, except the mere gratification of the senses. Oh, my friend, this is sad!

I have imagined that I was quite unable to write a letter. I was glad to find that there was warmth enough remaining about my heart to animate me to answer, in two posts, an anxious letter which I received from your son, on his return from Newfoundland. Poor fellow! I sincerely feel for his situation, of which (as I mentioned to him) I have a stronger impression since passing a day and a night on board of Captain Macbride's ship, in the grand fleet, last summer. I have assured your son that I shall not fail to remind Mr. Dundas of his kind promise. What more can be done?

My spirits have been still more sunk by seeing Sir Joshua Reynolds almost as low as myself. He has, for more than two months past, had a pain in his blind eye, the effect of which has been to occasion a weakness in the other, and he broods over the dismal appre-

hension of becoming quite blind. He has been kept so low as to diet that he is quite relaxed and despondING. He who used to be looked upon as perhaps the most happy man in the world, is now as I tell you. I force myself to be a great deal with him, to do what is in my power to amuse him. Your friend Miss Palmer's assiduity and attention to him in every respect is truly charming.

Am I to hear no more of Miss Temple's lover? I keep chambers open in the Temple, I attend in Westminster Hall, but there is not the least prospect of my having business.

This is a desponding, querulous letter, which I have wished these several weeks to write. Pray try to do me some good. My daughters join me in best compliments, and I ever am

Most affectionately yours,

J. B.

92] LONDON, *29th March*, 1792.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Still I cannot write a long letter, though I got a frank yesterday on purpose from the Bishop of London. I had this morning the pleasure of Mr. Powlett's company at breakfast, and like him much. He is to take a part of our family dinner on Sunday.

I ever am

Most affectionately yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

93] LONDON, *26th February*, 1793.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I have no time now for our usual reflections on wretched dilatory habits. I have from day to day been uneasy that I did not answer your kind

letters; and now I am within a few hours of setting out for Auchinleck, honest David having secured me a place in the Carlisle coach to Ferry Bridge, that I may have an opportunity to stop should I be too much fatigued. It is quite right that I should now go down. The choice of a minister to a worthy parish is a matter of very great importance, and I cannot be sure of the real wishes of the people without being present. Only think, Temple, how serious a duty I am about to discharge! I, James Boswell, Esq.—you know what vanity that name includes!—I have promised to come down on purpose, and his Honour's goodness is gratefully acknowledged. Besides, I have several matters of consequence to my estate to adjust; and though the journey will no doubt be uncomfortable, and my being alone in that house, where once I was so happy, be dreary in a woful degree, the consciousness of duty, and being busy, will I hope support me. I shall write to you, my friend, from my *Seat*. I am to be there only about three weeks; for I return early in April, to appear in an Appeal before the House of Lords, and to publish the second edition of my "Life of Johnson," for which I have lately received some more additions of great value.

Meantime I send you, from Payne's catalogue, small edition of Brumoy, "Théâtre des Grecs;" Thornton's "Plautus" (I forget the price—they are above £4 4*s*.); also, Horsley's (Bishop of St. David's) Sermon; Hay's ditto; "Village," a poem, by the same author; "The Library," a poem, as suited to your present zeal; and a letter to Fox, reckoned the best pamphlet that has appeared for some time.

From myself please to receive, Print of Dr. Johnson; two numbers of "European Magazine," containing memoirs of your friend; an excellent little tract on

Contentment, by Dr. Paley. I can add no more now, but that I ever am

Most affectionately yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

94] LONDON, 21*st June*, 1793.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Behold my *hand!* The robbery is only of a few shillings; but the cut on my head and the bruises on my arms were sad things, and confined me to bed, in pain and fever and helplessness, as a child, many days. By means of Surgeon Earle and Apothecary Devaynes, I am now, I thank God, pretty well. This however shall be a crisis in my life: I trust I shall henceforth be a sober, regular man. Indeed, my indulgence in wine has, of late years especially, been excessive. You remember what Lord Eliot said, nay, what you, I am sorry to think, have seen. Your suggestion as to my being carried off in a state of intoxication is awful. I thank you for it, my dear friend. It impressed me much, I assure you.

Your somewhat mysterious letter (without a date) alarmed me, but not greatly; because, though I guess what you mean, I have confidence in your good sense and spirit. You have had experience of such tender folly, and, after it was past, have been sensible how weak it was. I am at the same time aware that *a new instance* seems *stronger* than any former one, and therefore gives us trouble, unless we call in reason to our relief. *I*, who have often been the victim of such feverishness, know that the best cure is *diversion;* and therefore, if you find the complaint obstinate, remove from St. Gluvias for a time, and dissipate yourself in some place where you can have variety. But I conjure you to send me a promise that you will not *act* without my consent.

I will do what I can as to John James and Octavius. I have good interest at Eton, and shall be there soon.

Sir Kit shall be applied to for a safe conveyance of your deeds.

The printer is very slow with my second edition: I hope to have it out next week. The additions (above eight sheets) shall be sent to you. My Continental tour is to hold.

I ever am, my dear Temple,
Most affectionately yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

95] LONDON, *14th October*, 1793.

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—Your kind letter on your return home was truly consolatory to me. I have, as a *salvo* for my indolent procrastination, thought of waiting till the long letter which you promised a few days afterwards should come, so that I might answer both at a time; but I can no longer defer sending you at least a token that I am alive, and that my affectionate regard for you is constant. My spirits are somewhat better, but by no means right yet. The day after you left us a nephew of my wife's, a most deserving young man, who has been fifteen years an officer in the East India Company's service, almost continually in the field, and yet only a subaltern, arrived unexpectedly, having been obliged to come home on account of bad health; he has been very unfortunate; for he has been three times obliged to quit the country by reason of the dangerous liver complaint, and this last time he lost a very profitable appointment of Muster-Master to the Southern Army; he has not acquired above £3000, but, by succession, has about £6000 more; and after such repeated warnings, he must not return to a climate so hostile to his health.

He is now quite recovered by change of climate. Such, my dear friend, are the disappointments to which poor mortals are subject. I do not wonder at *Franky's* impatience and piteous letters; but I find that lieutenants are made only as they are wanted for particular ships. I trust that, after what Dundas said to you, your son cannot fail to be nominated soon, and that before he sails.

I congratulate you on the removal of your troublesome guests. What a shocking thing was it to treat poor Octavius as they did! You see, when *love* is in the case, other affections give way in a daughter. You must consider your own happiness, my dear friend, while you do liberal duty to your children, as I am sure you will do. This is my own resolution; and were I to see a *proper object* I should act accordingly, supposing I could really see a prospect of mutual happiness. I am sorry that the delusion is not yet quite gone; it will trouble your mind in many views, but I flatter myself you will get the better of it.

It pleases me much that you think so well of my daughters; and in truth, when my judgment is clear and my temper not irritated, I think of them as you do.

My brother has had a letter from John James,—much better reconciled to Eton: be not then uneasy about him.

I am not yet in a frame to write as I could wish to you; I can only assure you of my regret that I was so ill when you were last with me, and that

I ever am, my dear friend,

Yours most affectionately,

JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—Best compliments from my daughters and James.

CHAPTER XIX

1794–1795

Indisposition—French Revolution—Intemperance and remorse—Serious Illness—Letters from Boswell's son and brother—Boswell's death.

In a letter to his father (April the 8th, 1795) the younger Mr. Temple, after acknowledging the kindness which Miss Boswell and her sister had shown him, proceeds to mention that "a few nights ago Mr. Boswell returned from the Literary Club quite weak and languid." He however recovered from this attack at least partially; but the disease had laid hold of his weakened constitution, and Mr. Temple hears in a few days of the serious illness of his friend, from whom he receives only one more letter in his own handwriting. The last letter he had from Boswell, before his final illness, is as follows:—

96] London, 31*st May*, 1794.

My dear Temple,—Your fall has suggested serious and anxious thoughts indeed. In a moment, that awful separation which we so much dread might have taken place. How thankful am I that it is no worse! That you have been upon horseback again is a sign that no essential and lasting injury has been sustained.

All your packets came safely. It would have appeared better if you had divided them by two posts; but Courtenay is very good, *as a private*

friend, and, as he lives very near me, I get my letters very speedily.*

You have taken great pains in reading and transcribing such a number of Illustrations, which are truly strong warnings against the horrible proceedings in France. But Mr. Dilly would not risk printing even the Sermon; and the Illustrations would occasion double or treble the expense. Mr. Malone is clear that a Fast Sermon would not sell now; so is the Bishop of Salisbury, whom I consulted. His Lordship said, that if you, in order to do good, should print your Sermon, you may give it away; but that such a number of writings against the French Revolution have now appeared, that a Sermon on the subject would not be bought. You must console yourself with your worthy intentions, and *labor ipse voluntas*. I am shocked to hear of the scandalous conduct of three of your Cornish clergymen. Indeed, every man who is not zealous against every democratical motion at present appears to me infatuated. From what you write, I am glad I saw no more of Grantham when he was in town; I send you his letter to me.

I thank you sincerely for your friendly admonition on my frailty in indulging so much in wine. I *do* resolve *anew* to be upon my guard, as I am sensible how very pernicious as well as disreputable such a habit is. How miserably have I yielded to it in various years! Recollect what General Paoli said to you,—recollect what happened at Berwick.

You seem too violent against D—— on account of Miss M——. I have heard "alteram partem." But I will try to persuade him to get the apothecary's bill paid for her. You must not consider her by any

* Mr. Courtenay's franks frequently appear on Boswell's letters.

means as having the extraordinary strong claims on the Admiral. The £40 annuity will, I doubt not, be certain. The post-bell rings.

Yours ever,

J. B.

97]

MY DEAR TEMPLE,—I would fain write to you in my own hand, but really cannot. [These words, which are hardly legible, and probably the last poor Boswell ever wrote, afford the clearest evidence of his utter physical prostration.] Alas, my friend, what a state is this! My son James is to write for me what remains of this letter, and I am to dictate. The pain which continued for so many weeks was very severe indeed, and when it went off I thought myself quite well; but I soon felt a conviction that I was by no means as I should be—so exceedingly weak, as my miserable attempt to write to you afforded a full proof. All then that can be said is, that I must wait with patience.

But, O my friend! how strange is it that, at this very time of my illness, you and Miss Temple should have been in such a dangerous state. Much occasion for thankfulness is there that it has not been worse with you. Pray write, or make somebody write, frequently. I feel myself a good deal stronger to-day, notwithstanding the scrawl. God bless you, my dear Temple! I ever am your old and affectionate friend, here and I trust hereafter,

JAMES BOSWELL.

To this letter the following lines from his son James are appended:—

Postscript.

DEAR SIR,—You will find by the foregoing, the whole of which was dictated by my father, that he is ignorant of the dangerous situation in which he was, and, I am sorry to say, still continues to be. Yesterday and to-day he has been somewhat better, and we trust that the nourishment which he is now able to take, and his strong constitution, will support him through.

I remain, with respect,

JAMES BOSWELL, JUN.

Another note, of April 8th, 1795, is also annexed to the above, as follows:—

REVEREND SIR,—My father being still unable to write, I again give you what information I can, which is only that he continued for a considerable time, since I wrote last, to be in a state of extraordinary pain and weakness.

He is now, I thank God, a great deal recovered, and the pain almost gone: the greatest care is taken of him. The advice of Dr. Warren, Mr. Earle the surgeon, Mr. Devaynes the apothecary, and Mr. Kingston, who has been bred up under him, have all in their different departments contributed towards the recovery.

I am, with great regard, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL, JUN.

A few days later, Boswell suffers a relapse. Being anxious that his friend Temple should hear from him, he directs his son James to write, which he does to the following effect:—

GREAT PORTLAND STREET,
17th April, 1795.

My father desires me to tell you, that on Tuesday evening he was taken ill with a fever, attended with a severe shivering and violent headache, disorder in his stomach and throwing up: he has been close confined to bed ever since. He thinks himself better to-day, but cannot conjecture when he shall recover. His affection for you remains the same. You will receive a long and full letter from him.

I am, Reverend Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,
JAMES BOSWELL, JUN.

The disease is however not to conquered, and there remains but little hope. Boswell's brother thus writes a few days later (on the 4th of May :)—" I am sorry to say my poor brother is in the most imminent danger; a swelling in his bladder has mortified, but he is yet alive, and God Almighty may restore him to us!" The weakness increases, and baffles the skill of Dr. Warren, one of the most eminent practitioners of the day, and who had attended, it will be remembered, Dr. Johnson on his deathbed.

The two following letters tell the concluding part of the sad story :—

Monday, 18*th May*, 1795.

DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to inform you that, since I wrote last, my father is considerably worse; he is weaker, and almost all the nourishment he takes comes off his stomach again. He had expressed a very earnest desire to be lifted out of bed, and Mr. Earle, the urgeon, thought it might be done with safety; but his trength was not equal to it, and he fainted away. ince that, he has been in a very bad way indeed,

and there are now, I fear, little or no hopes of his recovery.

I am, dear Sir,

With greatest respect, yours, etc.

JAMES BOSWELL (JUN.).

LONDON, *19th May*, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have now the painful task of informing you that my dear brother expired this morning at two o'clock: we have both lost a kind, affectionate friend, and I shall never have such another. He has suffered a great deal during his illness, which has lasted five weeks, but not much in his last moments. May God Almighty have mercy upon his soul, and receive him into His heavenly kingdom! He is to be buried at Auchinleck, for which place his sons will set out in two or three days. They and his two eldest daughters have behaved in a most affectionate, exemplary manner during his confinement: they all desire to be kindly remembered to you and Miss Temple, and beg your sympathy on this melancholy occasion.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate, humble servant,

T. D. BOSWELL.

The remains of Boswell were removed to Auchinleck to be interred. On his coffin-plate was inscribed his name, the date of his death, (May 19th, 1795), and his age, fifty-five years.*

Thus terminated in this world the career of James Boswell: it cannot be said prematurely, for he had finished the work allotted him. The particular and perhaps anomalous part appointed for him to play on the stage of Life, was now played out.

* The date assigned to his birth is October 29th, 1740.

Although the preceding pages may have disclosed undoubted defects in Boswell's character, yet they also exhibit genuine and excellent qualities, for which the world hitherto has not given him credit; and which indeed are all the more to be admired from the fact that they were never extinguished—though they may have been occasionally obscured—by the lower and ignoble influences to which his imperfect nature was unfortunately subject.

ADDITIONAL LETTERS

It has been already noticed [in the original Introduction] that Boswell carried on and published a humorous correspondence with the Hon. Andrew Erskine.* Some specimens of this are here subjoined. The Advertisement to the Volume containing these Epistles sets forth, as the grounds for their publication, the universal "curiosity" which prevails with regard to reading other people's letters. The main reasons however for reprinting some of them now are, that they are both *funny* and illustrative, in some degree, of one portion of the minor literature of the last century.

Captain Erskine, as well as his correspondent, affected literature, having published, amongst other trifles, certain "Town Eclogues." The object of these verses was, says the author, "to expose the false taste for florid descriptions which prevail so universally in modern poetry." The Eclogues, although not devoid of humour, do not merit restoration to the literature of our own day.

The correspondence between Erskine and Boswell is commenced by the latter, as follows :—

Auchinleck, *August* 25th, 1761.

Dear Erskine,—No ceremony, I beseech you! Give me your hand. How is my honest Captain Andrew? How goes it with the elegant, gentle Lady A——? the lovely, sighing Lady Jane——? and how, oh, how, does that glorious luminary Lady B—— do? You see I retain my usual volatility. The Boswells,

* See also page 13.

you know, came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror; and some of us possess the spirit of our ancestors, the French. I do, for one. A pleasant spirit it is. *Vive la bagatelle!* is the maxim. A light heart may bid defiance to fortune. And yet, Erskine, I must tell you that I have been a little pensive of late, amorously pensive,* and disposed to read Shenstone's Pastoral on Absence, the tenderness and simplicity of which I greatly admire. A man who is in love is like a man who has got the toothache: he feels most acute pain, while nobody pities him. In that situation am I at present, but well do I know that I will not be long so. So much for inconstancy! As this is my first epistle to you, it cannot in decency be a long one. Pray write to me soon. Your letters, I prophesy, will entertain me not a little; and will, besides, be extremely serviceable in many important respects; they will supply me with oil to my lamps, grease to my wheels, and blacking to my shoes. They will furnish me with strings to my fiddle, lashes to my whip, lining to my breeches, and buttons to my coat. They will make charming spurs, excellent knee-buckles, and inimitable watch-keys. In short, while they last I shall neither want breakfast, dinner, nor supper. I shall keep a couple of horses, and I shall sleep upon a bed of down; I shall be in France this year, and in Spain the next; with many other particulars too tedious to mention. You may take me in a metaphorical sense, but I would rather choose to be understood literally. I am

Your most affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

* By a comparison with the letters to Mr. Temple of this date the reader might discover, if desirous of so doing, who was the fair one now charming Boswell's imagination.

From Erskine to Boswell.

Kelly, *September 11th*, 1761.

Hail! mighty Boswell! at thy awful name
The fainting Muse relumes her sinking flame.
Behold how high the towering blaze aspires,
While Fancy's waving pinions fan my fires!
Swells the full song? it swells alone from thee,
Some spark of thy bright genius kindles me!
"But softly, Sir," I hear you cry,
"This wild bombast is rather dry:
I hate your d—n'd insipid song,
That sullen stalks in lines so long;
Come, give us short ones, like to Butler,
Or like our friend Auchinleck, the cutler."
A Poet, Sir, whose fame is to support,
Must ne'er write verses tripping, pert, and short:
Who ever saw a judge himself disgrace,
By trotting to the bench with hasty pace?
I swear, dear Sir, you're really in the wrong;
To make a line that's good, I say, James, make it long.

You see, Sir, I have quite the best of the argument, and indeed I was determined not to give it up till you acknowledged yourself vanquished; so to verse I go again, tooth and nail.*

How well you talk of glory and the Guards,
Of fighting heroes, and their great rewards!
Our eyes behold you glow with martial flame,
Our ears attend the never-ceasing theme.
Fast from your tongue the rousing accents flow,
And horror darkens on your sable brow!
We hear the thunder of the rolling war,
And see red Victory shouting from her car!

* Boswell was desirous, at this time, of entering the Guards, with the same object that not a few others before and since have had, viz. that of commanding the pleasures and adventures of the Metropolis.

You kindly took me up, an awkward cub,
And introduced me to the Soaping Club,*
Where, every Tuesday-eve, our ears are blest
With genuine humour and with genuine jest;
The voice of mirth ascends the list'ning sky,
While, soap his own beard every man, you cry.
Say, who could e'er indulge a yawn or nap,
When Barclay † roars forth Snip, and Bainbridge Snap? †
Tell me how I your favours may return;
With thankfulness and gratitude I burn.
I've one advice,—oh, take it, I implore!
Search out America's untrodden shore;
There seek some vast Savannah rude and wild,
Where Europe's sons at slaughter never smiled,
With fiend-like arts, insidious to betray
The sooty natives as a lawful prey.
At you th' astonish'd savages shall stare,
And hail you as a god, and call you fair:
Your blooming beauty shall unrivall'd shine,
And Captain Andrew's ‡ whiteness yield to thine.

In reality I'm under vast obligations to you. It was you who first made me thoroughly sensible (indeed, I very readily believed it) of the excellencies of my own poetry; and about that time I made two wonderful discoveries, to wit, that you was a sensible man, and that I was a good poet,—discoveries which, I dare say, are yet doubted by some incredulous people. Boswell, I shall not praise your letter, because I know you have an aversion at being thought a genius or a wit. The reluctance with which you always repeat your Cub,§ and the gravity of countenance which you always

* The Soaping Club—a club in Edinburgh, the motto of which was, "Every man soap his own beard; or, Every man indulge his own humour." Their game was that facetious one, "Snip, Snap, Snorum."

† Barclay and Bainbridge, two members of this Club.

‡ The writers of these Letters, instead of being rivals in wit, were rivals in complexion.

§ A poem, ode, or perhaps "piece" of Boswell's composition.

assume upon that occasion, are convincing proofs of this assertion. You hate flattery too; but in spite of your teeth I must tell you, that you are the best poet and the most humourous letter-writer I know; and that you have a finer complexion, and dance better, than any man of my acquaintance. For my part, I actually think you would make an excellent Champion at the approaching Coronation. What though malevolent critics may say you are too little? yet you are a Briareus in comparison of Tydeus, the hero of Statius's Thebais; and if he was not a warrior, then am I, Andrew Erskine, Lieutenant in the 71st Regiment, blind of one eye, humpbacked, and lame in both legs. We are all tired so much of the Highlands, that we had not been there three weeks before we all came away again. Lady B—— is gone a-visiting, and the rest of us are come to Kelly. It was most unaccountable in me to leave New Tarbat, for nowhere will you meet with such fine ingredients for poetical description. However we are all going back again when Mr. M—— comes from London; so some time in October you may expect a most cordial invitation. This is all at present (according to the simple but eloquent expression of the vulgar) from your sincere friend,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

[To the above letter Boswell replied in rhyme, until he reaches the last paragraph, when he condescends to the following prose passage, which is characteristic enough of the writer.]

. . . I cannot stop yet. Allow me a few more words. I live here in a remote corner of an old ruinous house,* where my ancestors have been very

* Auchinleck.

jovial. What a solemn idea rushes on my mind! They are all gone: I must follow. Well, and what then? Let me shift about to another subject. The best I can think of is a sound sleep: so good night! and believe me yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

NEW TARBAT, *Nov.* 23, 1761.

DEAR BOSWELL,—As we never hear that Demosthenes could broil beefsteaks, or Cicero poach eggs, we may safely conclude that these gentlemen understood nothing of cookery. In like manner, it may be concluded that you, James Boswell, and I, Andrew Erskine, cannot write serious epistles. This, as Mr. Tristram says, I deny; for this letter of mine shall contain the quintessence of solidity; it shall be a piece of boiled beef and cabbage, a roasted goose, and a boiled leg of pork and greens: in one word, it shall contain advice, sage and mature advice. Oh, James Boswell! take care and don't break your neck, pray don't fracture your skull, and be very cautious in your manner of tumbling down precipices; beware of falling into coal-pits, and don't drown yourself in every pool you meet with. Having thus warned you of the most material dangers which your youth and inexperience will be ready to lead you into, I now proceed to others less momentary indeed, but very necessary to be strictly observed. Go not near the Soaping Club; never mention Drury Lane playhouse; be attentive to those pinchbeck buckles which fortune has so graciously given you, of which I am afraid you're hardly fond enough;* never wash your face, but above all forswear

* Boswell had, as has been already seen, a great fondness for dress, which he has thus defended. "It has been certainly remarked that

poetry; from experience I can assure you, and this letter may serve as a proof, that a man may be as dull in prose as in verse; and as dullness is what we aim at, prose is the easiest of the two. Oh, my friend, profit by these my instructions! think that you see me studying for your advantage, my reverend locks overshadowing my paper, my hands trembling, and my tongue hanging out, a figure of esteem, affection, and veneration. By heavens, Boswell! I love you more—— but this I think may be more conveniently expressed in rhyme.

> "More than a herd of swine a kennel muddy,
> More than a brilliant belle polemic study,
> More than fat Falstaff loved a cup of sack,
> More than a guilty criminal the rack,
> More than attorneys love by cheats to thrive,
> And more than witches to be burnt alive."

I begin to be afraid that we shall not see you here this winter, which will be a great loss to you. If ever you travel into foreign parts, as Machiavel used to say, everybody abroad will require a description of New Tarbat * from you. That you may not appear totally ridiculous and absurd, I shall send you some little account of it. Imagine then to yourself what Thomson would call an interminable plain, interspersed in a lovely manner with beautiful green hills. The seasons here are only shifted by Summer and Spring. Winter, with his fur cap and his cat-skin gloves, was never

the most gallant men have been fond of elegance of dress. . . . and a very brave modern General, Lord Marck Kerr, is celebrated equally for his determined courage and his fine clothes" (*Hypochondriac Papers*).—Boswell, who was, it is said, partial to witnessing executions, might have noted the same passion in certain desperate scoundrels at Tyburn.

* New Tarbat, a wild seat in the Western Highlands of Scotland surrounded with mountains.

seen in this charming retreat. The castle is of Gothic structure, awful and lofty; there are fifty bedchambers in it, with halls, saloons, and galleries without number. Mr. M——'s father, who was a man of infinite humour, caused a magnificent lake to be made, just before the entry of the house. His diversion was to peep out of his window, and see the people who came to visit him skipping through it, for there was no other passage; then he used to put on such huge fires to dry their clothes that there was no bearing them. He used to declare that he never thought a man good company till he was half-drowned and half-burnt; but if in any part of his life he had narrowly escaped hanging (a thing not uncommon in the Highlands) he would perfectly doat upon him, and whenever the story was told him he was ready to choke himself. But to return. Everything here is in the grand and sublime style. But, alas! some envious magician, with his d—d enchantments, has destroyed all these beauties. By his potent art the house with so many bedchambers in it cannot conveniently lodge above a dozen people. The room which I am writing in just now is in reality a handsome parlour of twenty feet by sixteen, though in my eyes and to all outward appearance it seems a garret of six feet by four. The magnificent lake is a dirty puddle, the lovely plain a rude, wild country covered with the most astonishing high black mountains; the inhabitants, the most amiable race under the sun, appear now to be the ugliest, and look as if they were overrun with the itch: their delicate limbs, adorned with finest silk stockings, are now bare and very dirty; but to describe all the transformations would take up more paper than Lady B——, from whom I had this, would choose to give me. My own metamorphosis is indeed so extraordinary that I must

make you acquainted with it. You know I am really very thick and short, prodigiously talkative, and wonderfully impudent: now I am thin and tall, strangely silent, and very bashful. If these things continue, who is safe? Even you, Boswell, may feel a change. Your fair and transparent complexion may turn black and oily, your person little and squat, and who knows but you may eternally rave about the King of Great Britain's Guards,—a species of madness from which good Lord deliver us!

I have often wondered, Boswell, that a man of your taste in music cannot play upon the Jew's-harp; there are some of us here that touch it very melodiously, I can tell you. Corelli's solo of "Maggie Lauder," and Pergolesi's sonata of "The Carle he came o'er the Craft," are excellently adapted to that instrument. Let me advise you to learn it. The first cost is but three-halfpence, and they last a long time. I have composed the following Ode upon it, which exceeds Pindar as much as the Jew's-harp does the organ.

ODE UPON A JEW'S-HARP.

I

Sweet instrument! which, fixed in yellow teeth,
So clear, so sprightly, and so gay is found,
Whether you breathe along the shores of Leith,
Or Lomond's lofty cliffs thy strains resound;
Struck by a taper finger's gentle tip,
Oh, softly in our ears thy pleasing murmurs slip!

II

Where'er thy lively music's found,
All are jumping, dancing round;
Ev'n trusty William lifts a leg,
And capers like sixteen with Peg:
Both old and young confess thy powerful sway,
They skip like madmen, and they frisk away.

III

Roused by the magic of the charming air,
The yawning dogs forgo their heavy slumbers;
The ladies listen on the narrow stair,
And Captain Andrew straight forgets his numbers.
Cat and mice give o'er their battling,
Pewter plates on shelves are rattling,
But, falling down, the noise my lady hears,
Whose scolding drowns the trump more tuneful than the spheres!

Having thus, Boswell, written you a most entertaining letter, with which you are highly pleased, to your great grief I give over, in these or the like words,

Your affectionate friend,
ANDREW ERSKINE.

EDINBURGH, *Dec.* 2, 1761.

DEAR ERSKINE,—Notwithstanding of your affecting elegy on the death of two pigs, I am just now returned from eating a most excellent one with the most magnificent Donaldson. I wish you would explain to me the reason of my being so very hard-hearted as to discover no manner of reluctance at that innocent animal's being brought to table well roasted. I will confess to you, my friend, that I fed upon it with so small alacrity, neither do I feel any pangs of remorse for having so done. The reason perhaps lies so deep as to elude our keenest penetration: at the same time give me leave to offer my conjecture, which you may have by a little transmutation of a vulgar adage, in such manner as to obtain at one and the same time (so to speak) not only strong reason for my alleged inhumanity, but also an apparent pun and a seeming paradox, all which you have for the small and easy charge of saying, "The belly has no bowels."

I do assure you, the imperial sovereign of Pope's Head, Caledonian Dodsley, Scottish Baskerville, and Captain-General of Collective Bards, entertained us most sumptuously. I question much if Captain Erskine himself ever fared better; although I was the only author in the company, which, I own, surprised me not a little. Donaldson is undoubtedly a gentleman perfectly skilled in the art of insinuation. His dinners are the most eloquent addresses imaginable. For my own part, I am never a sharer in one of his copious repasts, but I feel my heart warm to the landlord, and spontaneously conceive this expressive soliloquy,—Upon my word, I must give him another hundred lines.

Now, my dear Captain, tell me how is it with you, after reading this? With what feeling are you most strongly possessed? But as this depends a good deal upon the time of the day at which you receive my epistle, I shall make no farther inquiry.

Thus, Sir, have I unbosomed the big exultation which possessed me upon occasion of what some of the Fathers would call *splendidum prandium*,—Englished thus, "a splendid dinner."

Are you not all this time very much astonished, nay somewhat piqued, that I have as yet made no mention of your last, notwithstanding of the wonderful enchantments which you relate, the sagacious advices which you give, and the "Ode to a Jew's-Harp," which you add? Forgive me, good Captain; blame Donaldson. Write to me whenever you have anything that you wish to say, and believe me

Yours,
JAMES BOSWELL.

P.S.—Are you not very proud of your Ode to Mid-

night? Lord K——* calls it the best poem in the English language, but it will not be long so: for, in imitation of it, I have written an "Ode to Gluttony," of which take two stanzas.

I

Hail, Gluttony! Oh let me eat
Immensely at thy awful board,
On which to serve the stomach meet,
What art and nature can afford.
I'll furious cram, devoid of fear,
Let but the roast and boil'd appear:
Let me but see a smoking dish,
I care not whether fowl or fish;
Then rush, ye floods of ale, adown my throat,
And in my belly make the victuals float!

II

And yet why trust a greasy cook,
Or give to meat the time of play,
While every trout gulps down a hook,
And poor dumb beasts arch butchers slay?
Why seek the dull, sauce-smelling gloom
Of the beef-haunted dining-room;
Where D—r gives to every guest,
With liberal hand whate'er is best;
While you in vain th' insurance must invoke
To give security you shall not choke?

EDINBURGH, *December* 8, 1761.

DEAR ERSKINE,—It is a very strange thing that I, James Boswell, Esq., "who am happily possessed of a facility of manners" (to use the very words of Mr. Professor Smith, which, upon honour, were addressed to me,—I can produce the letter in which they are to be found), I say it is a very strange thing that I should ever be at a loss how to express myself; and yet, at

* Lord Kellie.

this moment of my existence, that is really the case. May Lady B—— say unto me, "Boswell, I detest thee!" if I am not in downright earnest.

Mankind are such a perverse race of beings, that they never fail to lay hold of every circumstance tending to their own praise, while they let slip every circumstance tending to their censure. To illustrate this by a recent example: you see I accurately remember Mr. Smith's beautiful—I shall even grant you, just—compliment, but have quite forgot his severe criticism on a sentence so clumsily formed as to require an *I say* to keep it together, which I myself candidly think much resembles a pair of ill-mended breeches.

Having a mind, Erskine, to open a sluice of happiness upon you, I must inform you that I have lately got you an immensity of applause from men of the greatest taste. You know I read rather better than any man in Britain, so that your Works had a very uncommon advantage. I was pleased at the praise which you received; I was vain of having such a correspondent. I thought I did not envy you a bit; and yet, I don't know, I felt somehow as if I could like to thrash you pretty heartily; however, I have one comfort in thinking that all this praise would not have availed you a single curl of Sir Cloudesly Shovel's periwig, had not I generously reported it to you; so that, in reality, you are obliged to me for it.

The second volume of the Poems * will not be published till January; Captain Erskine will make a very good figure,—Boswell a decent one.

Lady B—— entreats me to come and pass the Christmas holidays with her. Guess, O guess! what transport I felt at reading that; I did not know how to contain

* These volumes of poems by Scotch gentlemen have been mentioned [in the original Introduction].

my elevation of spirits. I thought myself one of the greatest geniuses in Europe; I thought I could write all sorts of books, and work at all handicraft trades; I imagined that I had fourscore millions of money out at interest, and that I should actually be chosen Pope at the next election. I obtest you, my friend, in the warmest spirit of love, to return her Ladyship my most sincere thanks, and tell her that, when the planets permit us to meet, she herself shall judge how richly I can express my gratitude.

Although I am a good deal of a Don Quixote, yet I feel myself averse to so long a journey. Believe me, I am as sweetly indolent as any genius in all his Majesty's dominions, so that, for my own incitement, I must propose the following scheme. You, Captain Andrew, shall, upon Monday the twenty-eighth day of the present month, set out from New Tarbat in Mr. M——'s chaise, and meet me at Glasgow that evening. Next day shall we both, in friendly guise, get into the said chaise, and drive with velocity to your present habitation, where I shall remain till the Monday se'nnight; on which day I shall be in like manner accompanied back to Glasgow, from thence to make my way, as well as I can, to the Scottish Metropolis. I have told the story of my scheme rather awkwardly, but it will have its advantages. I shall have a couple of days more of your classical company, and somewhat less to pay, which, to a poet, is no slender consideration.

I shall chaise it the whole way,—thanks to the man who first invented that comfortable method of journeying! had it not been for that, I dare say both you and I would have circumscribed our travels within a very few miles. For my own part I think to dress myself in a great-coat and boots, and get astride a horse's

back and be jolted through the mire, perhaps in wind and rain, is a punishment too severe for all the offences which I can charge myself with. Indeed I have a mortal antipathy to riding, and that was the true reason for my refusing a regiment of dragoons which the King of Prussia offered me at the beginning of this war. I know indeed the Mareschal Duke de Belleisle, in his "Political Testament," has endeavoured to persuade the world that it was owing to my having a private amour with a lady of distinction in the Austrian Court; but that Minister was too deeply immersed in State intrigues to know much about those of a more tender nature. The tumultuous hurry of business and ambition left no room in his mind for the delicious delicacy of sentiment and passion, so very essential to a man of gallantry.

I think, Erskine, in this scheme of mine I am playing a very sure game, for you must either indulge me in every article which I have mentioned, or entertain me with a plentiful dish of well-dressed apologies. I beg it of you, however, don't put yourself to any inconvenience; indeed, I might have saved myself the trouble of making this request, for you are that kind of man that I believe you would not put yourself to an inconvenience to be made a Lieutenant-General. Pray shall we not see you here this winter at all? You ought to come and eat the fruit of your labours.

I remain,

Your most affectionate friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

I shall rouse Donaldson, as you desire; I shall rouse him like a peal of thunder.

I wonder what you will all think of this proposal of mine for delivering myself in folio. Ten days make a

period, as I used to say: they bear some proportion to the whole of life. Write instantly.

SEQUEL OF THE ODE TO GLUTTONY.

III

Ev'n now, upon his elbow-chair,
A glutton surfeit-struck reclines;
See him look round with frightful stare,
And beg for drink with eager signs.
His gullet stuff the unchewed bits,
He groans and nods his head by fits;
His high-swoll'n cheeks, that were so red,
With egg-shell whiteness are o'erspread;
Ah! quickly thump his back, lest, for a boast,
Death from his liver rive his bouncing ghost.

IV

Ev'n now on venison much intent,
The great John Bull, pleas'd with his fate,
Gorges until his sides are rent,
And glows voluptuous o'er his plate.
He, while he eyes the godlike haunch,
Rubs his rotundity of paunch;
Which, when replete in every chink,
His Worship makes sublimely think:
Or, an inveterate enemy to chat,
Delighted views a splendid store of fat!

V

Bread fills the mouths of hungry clowns;
The blacksmith's clumsy grinders go;
The kitchens sweat thro' all the towns;
The cock now fry'd no more shall crow.
The baker tarts and cheesecakes brings;
The rusty jack, ear-grating, sings;
Each footman, with an angry voice,
Damns the confounded creaking noise.
The ham suspended, when the strings are broke,
Assaults Bob's powder'd pate with dreadful stroke.

VI

And now, perhaps, the buxom wife
Of Vintner Thom * consults her spouse,
How those who play the keenest knife,
She best may feast within her house.
She sees before her mind's clear glass,
All sorts of fresh provisions pass;
She makes pots, pans, and spits be scour'd,
For dressing what shall be devour'd.
Haste! let me thither hie with purpose good,
To swallow monstrous quantities of food!

NEW TARBAT, *December* 13, 1761.

DEAR BOSWELL,—An Ode to Tragedy, by a gentleman of Scotland, and dedicated to you! † had there been only one spark of curiosity in my whole composition, this would have raised it to a flame equal to the general conflagration. May G—d d—n me, as Lord Peter says, if the edge of my appetite to know what it can be about, is not as keen as the best razor ever used by a member of the Soaping Club. Go to Donaldson, demand from him two of my franks,‡ and send it me even before the first post. Write me, O write me, what sort of man this author is! where he was born, how he was brought up, and with what sort of diet he has been principally fed. Tell me his genealogy, like Mr. M——; how many miles he has travelled in post-chaises, like Colonel R——; tell me what he eats, like a cook; what he drinks, like a wine-merchant; what

* Thom, in whose house the Soaping Club was always held.

† This letter was occasioned by seeing an "Ode to Tragedy," written by a gentleman of Scotland, and dedicated to James Boswell, Esq., advertised in the Edinburgh newspapers: it afterwards appeared that the Ode was written by Mr. Boswell himself.

‡ It may perhaps be permitted to mention that this "Ode to Tragedy" was certainly neither worth two franks nor one perusal.

shoes he wears, like a shoemaker; in what manner his mother was delivered of him, like a man-midwife; and how his room is furnished, like an upholsterer; but if you happen to find it difficult to utter all this in terms befitting Mr. M——, Colonel R——, a cook, a wine-merchant, a shoemaker, a man-midwife, and an upholsterer, oh! tell it me all in your manner, and in your own incomparable style.

Your scheme, Boswell, has met with—but the thoughts of this Ode-writing gentleman of Scotland again comes across me! I must now ask, like the "Spectator," is he fat or lean, tall or short; does he use spectacles? what is the length of his walking-stick? has he a landed estate? has he a good coal-work? Lord! Lord! what a melancholy thing it is to live twenty miles from a post-town! why am I not in Edinburgh? why am I not chained to Donaldson's shop?

I received both your letters yesterday, for we send to the post-house but once a week. I need not tell you how I liked them; were I to acquaint you with that, you would consecrate the pen with which they were written, and deify the inkhorn. I think the outside of one of them was adorned with the greatest quantity of good sealing-wax I ever saw, and my brother A—— and Lady A——, both of whom have a notable comprehension of these sort of things, agree with me in this my opinion.

Your Ode to Gluttony is altogether excellent; the descriptions are so lively, that, mistaking the paper on which they were written for a piece of bread and butter spread with marmalade, I fairly swallowed the whole composition, and I find my stomach increased threefold since that time. I declare it to be the most abominable whet in the world, superior to a solan goose, or white

wine and bitters: it ought to be hung up in every cook's-shop in the three kingdoms, engraved on pillars in all market-places, and pasted in all rooms in all taverns.

You seem to doubt in your first letter, if ever Captain Erskine was better entertained by the great Donaldson than you was lately. Banish that opinion; tell it not in Gath, nor publish it in Ascalon; repeat it not in John's Coffee-house, neither whisper it in the Abbey of Holyrood House. No, I shall never forget the fowls and oyster-sauce which bedecked the board: fat were the fowls and the oysters of the true Pandour or Croat kind. Then the apple-pie with raisins, and the mutton with calliflower, can never be erased from my remembrance. I may forget my native country, my dear brothers and sisters, my poetry, my art of making love, and even you, O Boswell! but these things I can never forget; the impression is too deep, too well imprinted, ever to be effaced. I may turn Turk or Hottentot, I may be hanged for stealing a bag to adorn my hair, I may ravish all sorts of virgins young and old, I may court the fattest Wapping landlady,—but these things I can never forget. I may be sick and in prison, I may be deaf, dumb, and may lose my memory,—but these things I can never forget!

And now, Boswell, I am to acquaint you that your proposal is received with the utmost joy and festivity; and the scheme, if I live till tomorrow fortnight, will be put in execution. The New Tarbat chaise will arrive at Glasgow on Monday evening the 28th of December, drove by William. Captain Andrew's slim personage will slip out, he will inquire for James Boswell, Esq.; he will be shown into the room where he is sitting before a large fire, the evening being cold; raptures and poetry will ensue, and every man will

"Soap his own Beard;" every other article of the proposals will be executed as faithfully as this. But to speak very seriously, you must be true to your appointment, and come with the utmost regularity upon the Monday. Think of my emotions at Græme's if you should not come; view my melancholy posture! Hark! I rave like Lady Wishfort,—no Boswell yet! Boswell's a lost thing! I must receive a letter from you before I set out, telling me whether you keep true to your resolution, and pray send me the Ode to Tragedy. I beg you will bring me out in your pocket my Critical Review, which you may desire Donaldson to give you; but, above all, employ Donaldson to get me a copy of "Fingal," which, tell him, I'll pay him for: I long to see it.

There are some things lately published in London which I should be glad to have, particularly a "Spousal Hymn on the Marriage of the King and Queen," and an "Elegy on viewing a Ruined Pile of Buildings;" see what you can do for me. I know you will not take it ill to be busied a little for that greatest of all poets Captain Andrew.

The sluice of happiness you have let in upon me has quite overflowed the shallows of my understanding. At this moment I am determined to write more and print more than any man in the kingdom; except the great Dr. Hill,* who writes a folio every month, a quarto every fortnight, an octavo every week, and a duodecimo every day. Hogarth has humorously repre-

* The Dr. Hill here referred to was probably the person who called himself Sir John Hill. He was a very voluminous author, chiefly on botanical subjects: his "Vegetable System" is in twenty-six volumes folio. He also indulged in editing a scandalous newspaper called the *Inspector*, and was a rare example of science and scoundrelism, of industry and quackery, being successfully combined in one person.

sented a brawny porter almost sinking to the ground under a huge load of his Works. I am too lazy just now to copy out an Ode to Indolence, which I have lately written. Besides, it's fitting I reserve something for you to peruse when we meet, for upon these occasions an exchange of poems ought to be as regular as an exchange of prisoners between two nations at war. Believe me, dear Boswell, to be yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

P.S.—Pray write me before I set out for Glasgow. The "Ode to Tragedy," by a gentleman of Scotland, good now! wonderful!

EDINBURGH, *December 17th*, 1761.

DEAR ERSKINE,—Had you but hinted a method of conveyance sooner than by the first post, sooner should the "Ode to Tragedy" have saluted your longing eyes.

At length it comes! it comes! Hark with what lofty music do the spheres proclaim its triumphal entry into the majestic edifice at Tarbat! Behold the family gathered around it in a sort of quadrangular figure! Heavens! what a picture of curiosity! what a group of eager expectants! They show their teeth, they rub their hands, they kick the floor! But who is this, the fire of whose looks flames infinitely beyond the rest? It is Captain Andrew! it is! it is! Ye gods, he seizes! he opens! he reads! Let us leave him: I can no more: it would stretch the strings too far to proceed. You must know I purposely neglected to send the Ode myself, and likewise prevented Donaldson from sending it immediately when it was published, in order to give full play to your impatience. I considered what amazing effects it must produce upon Captain Erskine

to find in one advertisement an "Ode to Tragedy," a Gentleman of Scotland, Alexander Donaldson, and James Boswell, Esq. How far my conjecture was just your last letter does most amply testify.

The author of the "Ode to Tragedy" is a most excellent man: he is of an ancient family in the west of Scotland, upon which he values himself not a little. At his nativity there appeared omens of his future greatness; his parts are bright, and his education has been good; he has travelled in postchaises miles without number; he is fond of seeing much of the world; he eats of every good dish, especially applepie; he drinks old hock; he has a very fine temper; he is somewhat of a humourist, and a little tinctured with pride; he has a good, manly countenance, and he owns himself to be amorous; he has infinite vivacity, yet is observed at times to have a melancholy cast; he is rather fat than lean, rather short than tall, rather young than old; his shoes are neatly made, and he never wears spectacles. The length of his walking-stick is not as yet ascertained, but we hope soon to favour the republic of letters with a solution of this difficulty, as several able mathematicians are employed in its investigation, and for that purpose have posted themselves at different given points in the Canongate; so that when the gentleman saunters down to the Abbey of Holyrood House, in order to think of ancient days, on King James the Fifth and on Queen Mary, they may compute its altitude above the street according to the rules of geometry.

I hope you have received a line from me, fixing Thursday the 24th as the day of our meeting. I exult in the prospect of felicity that is before us. "Fingal" and your "Critical Review" shall accompany me. I will not anticipate your pleasure in reading the

Highland Bard; only take my word for it, he will make you feel that you have a soul. I shall remember your other commissions. Continue to trust me till you find me negligent.

I beg it of you, for once be a Frenchman, and in the character of Boswell kneel, supplicate, worship Lady B——.

I remain,
Your affectionate friend,
JAMES BOSWELL.

NEW TARBAT, *December* 16, 1761.

DEAR BOSWELL,—Swift as pen can scratch, or ink can flow, as floods can rush, or winds can blow,—which, you'll observe, is a very pretty rhyme,—I sit down in a chair which has really a very bad bottom, being made of wood, and answer your epistle, which I received this moment; it is dated on Saturday, the 14th, which was really the 12th, according to the computation of the best chronologists. This is a blunder which Sir Isaac Newton would never have excused; but I, a man no less great, forgive it from my soul; and I here declare that I will never upbraid you with it in any company or conversation, even though that conversation should turn upon the quickest and most pleasant method of swallowing oysters, when you know I might very naturally introduce it.

I confess it's singularly silly in me to turn the page in this manner, and that I should have followed your example, or rather ensample, as some great judges of style usually write it. I see by the newspapers that "Fingal" is to be published at Edinburgh in a few days; pray bring it with you.

I will undoubtedly meet you at Glasgow on the twenty-fourth of the month, being exactly that day which precedes Christmas, as was ingeniously observed by Mr. Sheridan in his fourth Lecture: and I hear he is going to publish a whole volume of discoveries, all as notable as this, which I imagine will exceed his Lectures greatly.

Pray now be faithful to this appointment, and so I commit this letter to the guidance of Providence, hoping that it will not miscarry or fail of being duly delivered. Believe me yours sincerely.

ANDREW ERSKINE.

NEW TARBAT, *January 10th*, 1762.

DEAR BOSWELL,—Cicero, in his book of "Office-houses," defines ingratitude to be **********, which both Dean Swift and Tristram Shandy take as a most exact definition.

The storms of night descended, the winds rolled along the clouds with all their ghosts, around the rock the dark waves burst and showed their flaming bosoms, loud rushed the blast through the leafless oaks, and the voice of the Spirit of the Mountains was heard in our halls; it was Saturday, when lo! at once the postman came; mighty was his striding in the kitchen, and strong was his voice for ale! In short, I have as yet received no letter from you, and great is my wonder and astonishment; even Donaldson has not sent me my "Critical Review;" would to God he had one rap from Fingal's sword of Luno!

I feel myself at this present moment capable of writing a letter which would delight you, but I am determined not to do it, and this is the severe punishment of your neglect: I withhold the treasures of my

wit and humour from you,—a perfect Golconda mine of diamonds.

I have been enjoying, since you left me, the most exquisite entertainment, in the perusal of the noble works of Ossian, the greatest poet, in my opinion, that ever composed, and who exceeds Homer, Virgil, and Milton. He transports us by the grandeur of his sublime, or by some sudden start of tenderness he melts us into distress. Who can read without the warmest emotions the pathetic complaints of the venerable old Bard, when he laments his blindness and the death of his friends? But how are we animated when the memory of former years comes rushing on his mind, and the light of the song rises in his soul! It is quite impossible to express my admiration of his poems: at particular passages I felt my whole frame trembling with ecstasy; but if I was to describe all my thoughts you would think me absolutely mad. The beautiful wildness of his fancy is inexpressibly agreeable to the imagination: for instance, the mournful sound from the untouched harp when a hero is going to fall, or the awful appearances of his ghosts and spirits.

Notwithstanding all these beauties, we shall still continue pedants, and Homer and Virgil will be read and quoted when Ossian shall be totally forgotten; this, without the gift of prophecy, I can foresee. Much could I enlarge upon this subject, but this must not be a long letter. Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

EDINBURGH, *January* 11, 1762.

DEAR ERSKINE,—Instead of endeavouring to excuse myself for neglecting so long to write, I shall present you with some original conjectures of my own, upon

the way and manner in which you have been affected on this present occasion. And here I must premise that, in so doing, I shall not follow the formal and orderly method of Bishop Latimer, in his sermons before King Edward VI., but, on the contrary, shall adopt the easy desultory style of one whom at present I shall not venture to name, but leave that to some future ingenious commentator on the epistolary correspondence of the Hon. Andrew Erskine and James Boswell, Esq.

Either you have been sunk into a frigid state of listless indifference, and gone whistling up and down the room upon a fife, and murmuring at intervals while you took breath, "Let him do as he likes; let him please himself; yes, yes, let him soap his own beard!" Or you have felt the most delicate pangs of afflicted sensibility, and uttered tender tales of woe in softly-plaintive numbers.

> "The savage bard returns no humorous line;
> No tragic ode now soothes my soul to rest;
> In vain I fly to Lady B——'s wine,
> Nor can a hearty supper make me blest."

Or you have burned, raged, and fried, like the thrice amorous swain in the renowned English translation of "Voi Amanti;" and perhaps thundered forth all the anathemas which Tristram Shandy has borrowed from the Church of Rome, and transferred to poor Obadiah.

By this time the storm is blown over. This merry letter has made you grin and show every expression of laughter: you are now in very good humour, and are in all human probability saying to yourself, "My good friend Boswell is a most excellent correspondent. It is true he is indolent and *dissipated*,—as the celebrated Parson Brown of Carlisle says,—and he frequently is a

little negligent; but when he does write, ye gods, how he does write! In short, to sing him his own inimitable song, 'There is no better fellow alive.'"

I remain, yours sincerely,

JAMES BOSWELL.

NEW TARBAT, *June* 20, 1762.

DEAR BOSWELL,—It [is] a kind of maxim, or rule in life, never to begin a thing without having an eye towards the conclusion. Certainly this rule was never better observed than in your last letter, in which indeed I am apt to think you kept the conclusion rather too much in view; or perhaps you forgot the beginning altogether, which is not unfrequently the case with you; but you do those things with so little compunction, that I shall very soon cease to forgive you, and answer you in the same manner. It is to be feared that the dissolution of our correspondence will immediately follow, or dwindle into half a page of your text-hand, which I always looked upon as a detestable invention. If all this that I dread happens, we shall then cease to be reckoned men of *letters*.

I find it recorded in the history of the Eastern Roman Empire, that it was the custom, whenever the inhabitants of Constantinople mutinied for want of bread, to whip all the bakers through the city, which always appeased the populace. In like manner, Boswell, I, having dreamt a few nights ago that I had whipt you severely, find my wrath and resentment very much mollified; not so much indeed, I confess, as if I had really had the pleasure of correcting you; but however I am pretty well satisfied. You was quite mistaken as as to the manner I bore your silence; I only thought it was a little droll.

Donaldson tells me that he wants thirty or forty pages to complete his volume. Pray don't let him insert any nonsense to fill it up; but try John Home and John R——, who, I hear, is a very good poet. You may also hint the thing to Mr. N——, and to my brother Lord K——, who has some excellent poems by him.

Since I saw you, I received a letter from Mr. D——:* it is filled with encomiums upon you. He says there is a great deal of humility in your vanity, a great deal of tallness in your shortness, and a great deal of whiteness in your black complexion. He says, there is a great deal of poetry in your prose, and a great deal of prose in your poetry. He says, that as to your late publication, there is a great deal of Ode in your Dedication, and a great deal of Dedication in your Ode; it would amaze you to see how D—— keeps up this see-saw, which, you'll remark, has prodigious wit in it. He says there is a great deal of coat in your waistcoat, and a great deal of waistcoat in your coat; that there is a great deal of liveliness in your stupidity, and a great deal of stupidity in your liveliness. But to write you all he says would require rather more fire in my grate than there is at present; and my fingers would undoubtedly be numbed, for there is a great deal of snow in this frost, and a great deal of frost in this snow. In short, upon this occasion he writes like a Christian and a poet, and a physician and an orator, and a Jew.

Pray, Boswell, tell me particularly in your first letter, how "Fingal" has been received; that book will serve me as a criterion to discover the taste of the present age. Boswell, imitate me in your writing; observe how closely the lines are joined, how near the words

* Probably Mr. Dempster.

are written to one another, and how small the letters are formed. I am praiseworthy in this particular. Adieu! Yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

EDINBURGH, *January* 22, 1762.

DEAR ERSKINE,—I would not, for all the books in Donaldson's shop, that our correspondence should cease. Rather, much rather, would I trot a horse in the hottest day in summer between Fort George and Aberdeen; rather, much rather, would I hold the office of him who every returning noon plays upon the music-bells of the good town of Edinburgh; and rather, much rather, would I be condemned to pass the next seven years of my life as a spiritless student at the College of Glasgow.

Let our wit, my friend, continue to shine in a succession of brilliant sparkles. Let there be no more distance between each flash of vivacity, but what is necessary for giving time to observe its splendid radiance. I hope I shall never again approach so near the clod of clay: I hope the fire of my genius shall never again be so long in kindling, or so much covered up with the dross of stupidity.

I have desired Donaldson to cause his correspondent at London to send a copy of the first volume of his collection to each of the Reviews; that is to say, to Hamilton and Griffiths, with whose names the slate-blue covers of these awful oracles of criticism are inscribed.

Donaldson has yet about thirty-six pages of the second volume to print. I have given him two hundred lines more. He is a loadstone of prodigious power, and attracts all my poetic needles. The volume

will be out next week: the different pieces of which it is composed are, to be sure, not all of equal merit; but is not that the case in every miscellaneous collection, even in that excellent one published by Mr. Dodsley? The truth is, that a volume printed in a small type exhausts an infinite quantity of *copy* (to talk technically), so that we must not be over-nice in our choice, nor think every man in our ranks below size who does not come up to the elevated standard of Captain Andrew.

D——'s encomiums have rendered my humility still prouder; they are indeed superb, and worthy of an opposer of the German War. I suppose they have not lost a bit of beef by their long journey; and I should imagine that the Highland air has agreed well with them, and that they have agreed well with the Highland air. They occasioned much laughter in my heart, and much heart in my laughter.

They have at last given over marrying me; so that I am going about like a horse wanting a halter, ready to be bridled and saddled by the first person who is so very fortunate as to lay hold of me—a simile not to be found in any author ancient or modern.

We had a splendid ball at the Abbey of Holyrood House on the Queen's birthday, given by Colonel Græme. I exhibited my existence in a minuet, and, as I was dressed in a full chocolate suit and wore my most solemn countenance, I looked, as you used to tell me, like the fifth act of a deep tragedy. Lord K—— danced with Miss C——, by the fire of whose eyes his melodious Lordship's heart is at present in a state of combustion. Such is the declaration which he makes in loud whispers many a time and oft.

Our friend H—— S—— is in town this winter; he is a most surprising old fellow. I am told he is

some years past sixty; and yet he has all the vivacity, and frolic, and whim of the sprightliest youth. He continues to rank all mankind under the general denomination of Gilbert. He patrols the streets at midnight as much as ever, and beats with as much vigour the town-guard drum; nor is his affection for the company of blind fiddlers in the least abated.

"Fingal" has been very warmly received at London: a second edition of it has just now come out. The public taste, you will allow, is good at present: long may it last! Long may the voice of the venerable Bard be heard with unaffected pleasure!

I see your regiment is ordered for England. I hope you will be allowed to recruit, or have leave of absence, as it would be very severe upon you to be moved from your present situation.

If you will number the lines in our pages, you will find I have twenty-three, whereas you have only eighteen.

I enclose you the sorrowful lamentation of a stabler, called Hutchison, who, on Wednesday last, was whipped through this town, for forcing away a young man as a recruit, and beating him unmercifully. The said Lamentation, you will find, is in verse, and, although sold for a single penny, is a work of remarkable merit. The exordium is a passionate address to Captains all, amongst whom, who can more properly be reckoned than Captain Andrew?

I remain, your sincere friend,

JAMES BOSWELL.

NEW TARBAT, *May* 1, 1762.

Well then, my friend, you leave the Bar,
Resolved on drums, on dress, and war,
While Fancy paints in liveliest hues
Swords, sashes, shoulder-knots, reviews;

You quit the study of the laws,
And show a blade in Britain's cause,
Of length to throw into a trance
The frighten'd Kings of Spain and France!
A hat of fiercest cock is sought,
And your cockade's already bought,
While on your coat there beams a lace
That might a captain-general grace!

For me, who never show admired,
Or very long ago was tired,
I can with face unmoved behold
A scarlet suit with glittering gold;
And, though a son of war and strife,
Detest the listless, languid life;
Then coolly, Sir, I say, repent,
And in derision hold a tent;
Leave not the sweet poetic band,
To scold recruits, and pore on Bland;
Our military books won't charm ye,
Nor ev'n the enchanting list o' th' army.

Trust me, 'twill be a foolish sight,
To see you facing to the right,
And then, of all your sense bereft,
Returning back unto the left;
Alas! what transport can you feel,
In turning round on either heel?
Much sooner would I choose, indeed,
To see you standing on your head;
Or, with your breeches off, to rub
Foul clothes, and dance within a tub,
Like Scottish lasses on the green,
When every naked limb is seen,
And all without a blush reveal'd,
By modest maids with care conceal'd.

Besides, my dear Boswell, we find in all history, ancient and modern, lawyers are very apt to run away. Demosthenes the Greek, Writer to the Signet, who managed the great suit against Philip of Macedon, fairly scoured off, I think, at the battle of Cheronea;

and Cicero, the Roman advocate, is universally accused of cowardice. I am not indeed ignorant that some of your ancestors behaved well at Flodden; but as they lost the day, I think the omen but bad; and as they were killed, I think that makes the omen still worse; however perhaps you don't think so, and I allow that argument to be very convincing, and rather more conclusive than if you had said, "I don't know that."

You complain much of the country, and you assign various reasons for disliking it; among others, you imagine the atmosphere too moist and heavy. I agree with you in that opinion: all the black clouds in the sky are continually pressing upon you; for, as the proverb says, "Like draws to like." Believe me, I have sometimes taken you at a distance for the pillar of smoke which used to accompany the Israelites out of Egypt; it would be impossible to tell how many things I have taken you for at different times: sometimes I have taken you for the witches' cauldron in "Macbeth,"—this resemblance was in some degree warranted by your figure and shape; sometimes for an enormous ink-bottle, sometimes for a funeral procession, now and then for a chimney-sweeper, and not unfrequently for a black-pudding. For my part, Boswell, I must confess I am fond of the country to a degree; things there are not so artificially disguised as in towns; real sentiments are discovered, and the passions play naturally and without restraint. As, for example, it was only in the country I could have found out Lady J——'s peculiar attachment to the tune of "Appie MacNab;" in the town, no doubt, she would have pretended a great liking for "Voi Amanti:" in the town, I never would have seen Lady B—— go out armed for fear of the turkey-cock, which is her daily

practice here, and leaves room for numberless reflections. She cannot eat turkeys, when roasted or boiled; and she dreads them, when alive, so much, that she displays every forenoon a cudgel to them, fitted by its size to strike terror into a bull or a butting cow. What can her keeping of turkeys be owing to? Assuredly to vanity, which is of such an insinuating nature, that we are apt very often to meet it where we least expect it. I have seen it in an old shoe, in a dirty shirt, in a long nose, a crooked leg, a red face; and you will scarcely credit me when I tell you, that I once met with it in a chamber-pot made of the coarsest delf. So much it seemed good for me to say upon the subject of vanity, supporting by the most irrefragable arguments the doctrine of Solomon.

We had a visit from Mr. C—— of S—— here this morning; he came in a chaise drawn by four bay horses. I am certain of the number. You may draw what inference you please from this intelligence; I give you only a simple narration of the fact. I am surprised you say nothing of my proposal of your coming here, and still more that you say nothing of your cub. Why don't you send me a copy? We were all so much entertained with your letter to Lady B——, that I was really seized with a qualm of envy. We regard it as one of those efforts of genius which are only produced by a fine flow of spirits, a beautiful day, and a good pen.

I pray you, Boswell, note well this sheet of paper; its size is magnificent. If Lady B—— was possessed of such an extent of plain ground, she would undoubtedly throw it into a lawn, and plant it with clumps of trees; she would vary it with fishponds, and render it rural with flocks. Here, where I am writing, might

a cow feed; here might be an arbour; here, perhaps, might you recline at full length; by the edge of the stream might the Captain walk; and in this corner might Lady B—— give orders to her shepherds. I am drawn, in the most irresistible manner, to conclude, by the external impulse of the cloth's being laid, and the internal impulse of being hungry. Believe me, Boswell, to be in the most unconscionable manner,

Your affectionate friend,
ANDREW ERSKINE.

P.S.—I send you franks, which return filled with the utmost wit and humour.

My fondness for the Guards must appear very strange to you, who have a rooted antipathy at the glare of scarlet. But I must inform you that there is a city called London, for which I have as violent an affection as the most romantic lover ever had for his mistress. There a man may indeed soap his own beard, and enjoy whatever is to be had in this transitory state of things. Every agreeable whim may be freely indulged without censure. I hope however you will not impute my living in England to the same cause for which Hamlet was advised to go there,—because the people were all as mad as himself.*

I long much for another of our long conversations on a fine forenoon after breakfast, while the sun sheds light and gladness around us. Yours sincerely,

JAMES BOSWELL.

* "The earth is as thirsty as Boswell, and cracked all over its surface, as certainly as *he* is in one part." (Letter of John Wilkes.)

NEW TARBAT, *May* 25, 1762.

DEAR BOSWELL,—It has been said that few people succeed both in poetry and prose. Homer's prose essay on the Gunpowder Plot is reckoned by all critics inferior to the "Iliad," and Warburton's rhyming satire on the Methodists is allowed by all to be superior to his prosaical notes on Pope's Works. Let it be mine to unite the excellencies both of prose and verse in my inimitable epistles. From this day my prose shall have a smack of verse, and my verse shall have a smack of prose. I'll give you a specimen of both. My servant addresses me in these words very often:—

> "The roll is butter'd, and the kettle boil'd,
> Your Honour's newest coat with grease is soil'd;
> In your best breeches glares a mighty hole,
> Your wash-ball and pomatum, Sir, are stole.
> Your tailor, Sir, must payment have, that's plain;
> He called to-day, and said he'd call again."

There's prosaic poetry; now for poetic prose. "Universal genius is a wide and diffused stream that waters the country and makes it agreeable; 'tis true it cannot receive ships of any burthen, therefore it is of no solid advantage, yet is it very amusing. Gondolas and painted barges float upon its surface; the country gentleman forms it into ponds, and is it spouted out of the mouths of various statues; it strays through the finest fields, and its banks nourish the most blooming flowers. Let me sport with this stream of science, wind along the vale and glide through the trees, foam down the mountain and sparkle in the sunny ray. But let me avoid the deep, nor lose myself in the vast profound; and grant that I may never be pent in the bottom of a dreary cave, or be so unfortunate as to stagnate in some unwholesome marsh. Limited genius is a pump-well, very useful in all the common occur-

rences of life; the water drawn from it is of service to the maids in washing their aprons; it boils beef, and it scours the stairs; it is poured into the tea-kettles of the ladies, and into the punchbowls of the gentlemen."

Having thus given you, in the most clear and distinct manner, my sentiments of genius, I proceed to give you my opinion of the ancient and modern writers,—a subject, you must confess, very aptly and naturally introduced. I am going to be very serious. You will trace a resemblance between me and Sir William Temple, or perhaps David Hume, Esq.

A modern writer must content himself with gleaning a few thoughts here and there, and binding them together without order or regularity, that the variety may please. The ancients have reaped the full of the harvest, and killed the noblest of the game; in vain do we beat about the once plenteous fields; the dews are exhaled, no scent remains. How glorious was the fate of the early writers! born in the infancy of letters, their task was to reject thoughts more than to seek after them, and to select out of a number the most shining, the most striking and the most susceptible of ornament. The poets saw in his walks every pleasant object of nature undescribed; his heart danced with the gale, and his spirits shone with the invigorating sun; his works breathed nothing but rapture and enthusiasm. Love then spoke with its genuine voice, the breast was melted down with woe, the whole soul was dissolved into pity with its tender complaints, free from the conceits and quibbles which since that time have rendered the very name of it ridiculous: real passion heaved the sigh; real passion uttered the most prevailing language. Music too reigned in its full force; that soft deluding art, whose pathetic strains so gently steal into our very

souls and involve us in the sweetest confusion, or whose animating strains fire us even to madness. How has the shore of Greece echoed with the wildest sounds! the delicious warblings of the lyre charmed and astonished every ear. The blaze of rhetoric then burst forth; the ancients sought not by false thoughts and glittering diction to captivate the ear, but by manly and energetic modes of expression to rule the heart and sway the passions.

There, Boswell, there are periods for you! Did not you imagine that you was reading the "Rambler" of Mr. Samuel Johnson, or that Mr. Thomas Sheridan himself was resounding the praises of the ancients, and his own art? I shall now finish this letter without the least blaze of rhetoric, and, with no very manly or energetic mode of expression, assure you that

I am, yours sincerely,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

KELLY, *July* 6, 1762.

DEAR BOSWELL,—I imagined that, by ceasing to write to you for some time, I should be able to lay up a stock of materials unusual to astonish you, and that like a river dammed up, when let loose I should flow on with unusual rapidity; or like a man who has not beat his wife for a fortnight, I should cudgel you with my wit for hours together; but I find the contrary of all this is the case. I resemble a person long absent from his native country, of which he has formed a thousand endearing ideas, and to which he at last returns; but, alas! he beholds with sorrowful eyes everything changed for the worse: the town where he was born, which used to have two snows * and three sloops trading

* A vessel with two masts.

to all parts of the known world, is not now master of two fishing-boats: the steeple of the church, where he used to sleep in his youth, is rent with lightning; and the girl on whom he had placed his early affections, has had three bastard children, and is just going to be delivered of a fourth. Or I resemble a man who has had a fine waistcoat lying long in the very bottom of a chest, which he is determined shall be put on at the hunter's ball; but woe's me, the lace is tarnished, and the moths have devoured it in a melancholy manner. These few similies may serve to show that this letter has little chance of being a good one, yet they don't make the affair certain. Prince Ferdinand beat the French at Minden; Sheridan, in his Lectures, sometimes spoke sense, and John Home wrote one good play. I have read Lord Kames's "Elements," and agree very heartily with the opinion of the Critical Reviewers; however, I could often have wished that his Lordship had been less obscure, or that I had had more penetration. He praises the "Mourning Bride" excessively; which nevertheless I can't help thinking a very indifferent play: the plot wild and improbable, and the language infinitely too high and swelling. It is curious to see the opinions of the Reviewers concerning you and me. They take you for a poor distressed gentleman writing for bread, and me for a very impudent Irishman; whereas you are heir to a thousand a year, and I am one of the most bashful Scotsmen that ever appeared. I confess indeed my bashfulness does not appear in my works, for them I print in the most impudent manner, being exceeded in that respect by nobody but James Boswell, Esq.

Yours, etc.,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

The following letter to Mr. Dempster, hitherto unpublished, has been communicated to the Editor by a friend. Mr. Dempster has been before referred to (pp. 16 and 27) as allied with Erskine and Boswell in concocting a pamphlet upon Mallet's "Elvira," and as having greatly displeased Dr. Johnson by his sceptical arguments and opinions. Mr. Dempster represented the Perth Burghs for many years, and died in 1818, at the advanced age of eighty-six. He was a supporter of Lord Rockingham, and is referred to by Burns in his "Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives."

"Dempster, a true-blue Scot, I'se warran,
Thee, aith detesting, chaste Kilkerran,
An that glib-gabbet Highland Baron,
The Laird of o'Graham;
An one, a chap that's d—d auld-farran,
Dundas his name."

The poem alluded to by Boswell was possibly one upon the "Slave-trade," which it is believed he wrote, although very uncertain traces of it can be found at the present day. Indeed in this repect it only shares the fate of several other of Boswell's writings, the libraries and catalogues not containing any notice whatever of them.*

LONDON, *April* 19, 1791.

MY DEAR DEMPSTER,—We must not entirely lose sight of one another, or rather, we must not suffer out of sight out of mind to be applicable to two such old

* The same remark applies to Mr. Temple's writings. For instance, in one of the Letters (March, 1793) which he preserved along with Boswell's correspondence, reference is thus made to some unknown publication in which Temple, it appears, had criticised Dr. Johnson. "I am glad," says the writer of the letter in question, "the swollen and bloated reputation of Johnson owes to your pen a very fair and just pruning and reduction." In other letters from other correspondents it would seem that Mr. Temple had amongst his friends those who (like himself) had no admiration for Dr. Johnson, and (unlike himself) a great contempt for Boswell. "Who," writes one, "would purchase fame as an author, or in any other way, on such terms as this creature, Boswell?"

friends, who have always lived pleasantly together, though of principles directly opposite. I was happy that your accepting one of Mr. Pulteney's Seats proved a false rumour, for it would have been a sad degradation; but though not in Parliament, you can be mischievous enough as a "*Whig Dog*," as Johnson would say, or rather, something even beyond that; for you are for that most horrible anarchy the French Revolution.

I some time ago resigned my Recordership of Carlisle. I perceived that no advantage would accrue from it; I could satisfy you in *conversation* that I was right.

The melancholy event of losing my valuable wife will, I fear, never allow me to have real comfort. You cannot imagine how it hangs upon my spirits; yet I can talk and write, and in short *force myself* to a wonderful degree. I enclose you a Poem which I have published, upon a subject on which I never heard your sentiments, but I could lay my life you are one of the pretty theorists; however you will have candour enough to allow that I have *worked* well.

I have a good house in Great Portland Street. My two eldest daughters live with me; my youngest is at a boarding-school at Chelsea; my eldest son is at Eton, my second at Westminster. I am sadly straitened in my circumstances; I can but *exist*, as to *expense;* but they are so good to me here, that I have a full share of the metropolitan advantages.

My *magnum opus*, the "Life of Dr. Johnson," in two volumes quarto, is to be published on Monday, 16th May. It is too great a book to be given in presents, as I gave my "Tour," so you must not expect one, though you yourself form a part of its multifarious contents. I really think it will be the most entertain-

ing collection that has appeared in this age. When it is fairly launched I mean to stick close to Westminster Hall, and it will be truly kind if you recommend me appeals, or causes of any sort.

Pray, let me have a long account of you as a *Rusticus*. My compliments to Mrs. Dempster.

Ever most truly yours,

JAMES BOSWELL.

Such a request (it may be observed) as that made in the latter part of the above letter, to the effect that his friend should "recommend" business to Boswell, is understood to be strictly unprofessional at the English Bar, wherever at least it becomes known. This breach of conventional etiquette was however more unavailing in Boswell's case than that of many others; he had as little success at the Bar as in politics; he obtained neither place, profit, nor reputation by either of these walks in life. His title to fame or the gratitude of the world is based alone upon the successful prosecution of his literary pursuits.



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